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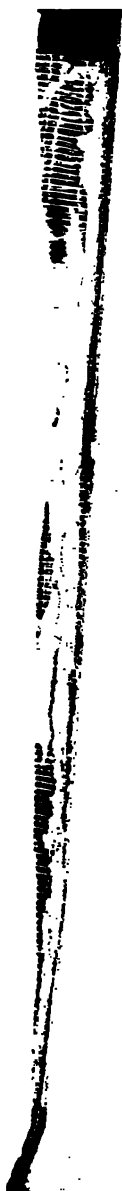
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# **ELOQUENT SONS**

## **of the South**

**A Handbook of Southern Oratory**

Edited by  
**JOHN TEMPLE GRAVES**  
**CLARK HOWELL**  
**WALTER WILLIAMS**



**VOL. I**

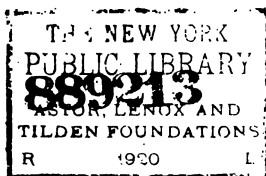
**The Chapple Publishing Company, Ltd.**

**Boston**

**August, MCMIX**

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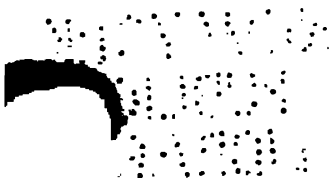




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stance General Lee and General Washington. These men were not primarily public speakers—their work was in another field—but the reader will detect in the passages printed the highest degree of eloquence—that quality that can be the possession of none but the brave and true and supremely great.

That these volumes may aid in the further preservation of the speeches therein contained; be a joy to the present generation that gratefully and admiringly remembers the service of everyone whose words are given; and inculcate in the minds of the rising and of succeeding generations that knowledge of and reverence for these great men whose lives were spent freely and unselfishly that these might live more abundantly, is the sincere wish of

THE PUBLISHER.



**ELOQUENT SONS  
OF THE SOUTH**

## CHRONOLOGY

**PATRICK HENRY** was born May 29, 1733 Studley, Hanover County, Virginia. Son of Henry, Scotch, and Sarah Winston, English. to the age of twenty-four attempted keepin country store and farming, at both of which suits he failed.

Was married in the fall of 1754, at the age eighteen, to Sarah Shelton.

Admitted to the Bar in 1760. Entered Virginia House of Burgesses, 1765.

Was associated with Thomas Jefferson, Richard Henry Lee, and Dabney Carr in procuring establishment of a committee of correspond for intercourse with the other colonies.

In 1744, a prominent member of the Continental Congress. In 1775, a leader in the Virginia Convention.

Governor of Virginia 1776-79, 1784-86. He was a member of the Ratifying Convention Virginia, where he acted with the Anti-Federalists.

Subsequently declined a seat in the Senate. In 1794, the Portfolio of State offered by Washington. In 1795, an appointment as Judge in the Supreme Court, and other offices.

Died at Red Hill, Charlotte County June 6, 1799.

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**PATRICK HENRY**

# Eloquent Sons of the South

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## PATRICK HENRY

SPEECH DELIVERED MARCH 23, 1775, IN THE  
CONVENTION OF DELEGATES OF VIRGINIA

On the following resolutions, introduced by himself:—

*"Resolved,* That a well-regulated militia, composed of gentlemen and yeomen, is the natural strength and only security of a free government; that such a militia in this colony would forever render it unnecessary for the mother country to keep among us, for the purpose of our defence, any standing army of mercenary soldiers, always subversive of the quiet, and dangerous to the liberties of the people, and would obviate the pretext of taxing us for their support.

*"That* the establishment of such a militia is, at this time, peculiarly necessary, by the state of our laws for the protection and defence of the country, some of which are already expired, and others will shortly be so; and that the known remissness of government in calling us together in legislative capacity, renders it too insecure, in this time of danger and distress, to rely, that opportunity will be given of renewing them, in general assembly, or making any provision to secure our inestimable rights and liberties from those further violations with which they are threatened.

*"Resolved, therefore,* That this colony be immediately put into a state of defence, and that



be a committee to prepare a plan for embodying, arming and disciplining such a number of men as may be sufficient for that purpose."

MR. PRESIDENT:

No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the house. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen, if, entertaining, as I do, opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely and without reserve. This is no time for ceremony. The question before the house is one of awful moment to this country. For my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery; and in proportion to the magnitude of the subject ought to be the freedom of the debate. It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at truth, and fulfil the great responsibility which we hold to God and our country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offence, I

should consider myself as guilty of treason toward my country, and of an act of disloyalty toward the Majesty of Heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.

Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren, till she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the number of those, who, having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst, and to provide for it.

I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided; and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British ministry for the last ten years, to justify those hopes

with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves and the house? Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, sir; it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss. Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with those warlike preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled, that force must be called in to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation; the last arguments to which kings resort. I ask gentlemen, sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy, in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us: they can be meant

for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains, which the British ministry have been so long forging. And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find, which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, sir, deceive ourselves longer. Sir, we have done everything that could be done, to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been

spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne! In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free—if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending—if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon, until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained—we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us!

They tell us, sir, that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance, by

lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat, but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable—and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come.

It is vain, sir, to extenuate the matter.

Gentlemen may cry, Peace, peace—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale, that sweeps from the north, will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!

## PATRICK HENRY

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### **SPEECH ON THE EXPEDIENCY OF ADOPTING THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION, DELIV- ERED IN THE CONVENTION OF VIRGINIA, JUNE 5, 1788**

The preamble and the first two sections of the first article of the Constitution being under consideration, Mr. Henry addressed the convention:—

**MR. CHAIRMAN:**

I am much obliged to the very worthy gentleman\* for his encomium. I wish I were possessed of talents, or possessed of anything, that might enable me to elucidate this great subject. I am not free from suspicion: I am apt to entertain doubts: I rose yesterday to ask a question, which arose in my own mind. When I asked that question, I thought the meaning of my interrogation was obvious: the fate of this question and of America may depend on this. Have they said, we, the states? Have they made a proposal of a compact between states? If they had, this would

\* Mr. Lee of Westmoreland



be a confederation: it is otherwise most clearly a consolidated government. The question turns, sir, on that poor little thing—the expression, we the people, instead of the states of America. I need not take much pains to show that the principles of this system are extremely pernicious, impolitic, and dangerous. Is this a monarchy, like England—a compact between prince and people; with checks on the former to secure the liberty of the latter? Is this a confederacy, like Holland—an association of a number of independent states, each of which retains its individual sovereignty? It is not a democracy where in the people retain all their rights securely. Had these principles been adhered to, we should not have been brought to this alarming transition, from a confederacy to a consolidated government. We have no detail of those great considerations which, in my opinion, ought to have abounded before we should recur to a government of this kind. Here is a revolution as radical as that which separated us from Great

Britain. It is as radical, if, in this transition, our rights and privileges are endangered, and the sovereignty of the states be relinquished. And cannot we plainly see that this is actually the case? The rights of conscience, trial by jury, liberty of the press, all your immunities and franchises, all pretensions to human rights and privileges, are rendered insecure, if not lost, by this change so loudly talked of by some, and inconsiderately by others. Is this tame relinquishment of rights worthy of freemen? Is it worthy of that manly fortitude that ought to characterize republicans? It is said eight states have adopted this plan. I declare that if twelve states and a half had adopted it, I would, with manly firmness, and in spite of an erring world, reject it. You are not to inquire how your trade may be increased, nor how you are to become a great and powerful people, but how your liberties can be secured; for liberty ought to be the direct end of your government. Having premised these things, I shall, with the aid of my judgment and

information, which I confess are not extensive, go into the discussion of this system more minutely. Is it necessary for your liberty, that you should abandon those great rights by the adoption of this system? Is the relinquishment of the trial by jury, and the liberty of the press, necessary for your liberty? Will the abandonment of your most sacred rights tend to the security of your liberty? Liberty, the greatest of all earthly blessings—give us that precious jewel, and you may take everything else. But I am fearful I have lived long enough to become an old-fashioned fellow. Perhaps an invincible attachment to the dearest rights of man may, in these refined, enlightened days, be deemed old-fashioned: if so, I am contented to be so. I say, the time has been when every pulse of my heart beat for American liberty, and which, I believe, had a counterpart in the breast of every true American. But suspicions have gone forth—suspicions of my integrity. It has been publicly reported that my professions are not real. Twenty-three years


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ago I was supposed a traitor to my country: I was then said to be a bane of sedition, because I supported the rights of my country: I may be thought suspicious, when I say our privileges and rights are in danger; but, sir, a number of the people of this country are weak enough to think these things are too true. I am happy to find that the gentleman on the other side declares they are groundless; but, sir, suspicion is a virtue, as long as its object is the preservation of the public good, and as long as it stays within proper bounds: should it fall on me, I am contented: conscious rectitude is a powerful consolation: I trust there are many who think my professions for the public good to be real. Let your suspicion look to both sides: there are many on the other side, who, possibly, may have been persuaded of the necessity of these measures, which I conceive to be dangerous to your liberty. Guard with jealous attention the public liberty. Suspect everyone who approaches that jewel. Unfortunately, nothing will preserve it but

downright force. Whenever you give up that force, you are inevitably ruined. I am answered by gentlemen, that though I may speak of terrors, yet the fact is, that we are surrounded by none of the dangers I apprehend. I conceive this new government to be one of those dangers: it has produced those horrors which distress many of our best citizens. We are come hither to preserve the poor commonwealth of Virginia, if it can be possibly done: something must be done to preserve your liberty and mine. The confederation, this same despised government, merits, in my opinion, the highest encomium: it carried us through a long and dangerous war: it rendered us victorious in that bloody conflict with a powerful nation: it has secured us a territory greater than any European monarch possesses: and shall a government which has been thus strong and vigorous be accused of imbecility, and abandoned for want of energy? Consider what you are about to do, before you part with this government. Take longer time in reckon-

ing things: revolutions like this have happened in almost every country in Europe: similar examples are to be found in ancient Greece and ancient Rome—instances of the people losing their liberty by their own carelessness and the ambition of a few. We are cautioned, by the honorable gentleman who presides, against faction and turbulence. I acknowledge that licentiousness is dangerous, and that it ought to be provided against: I acknowledge also the new form of government may effectually prevent it: yet there is another thing it will as effectually do: it will oppress and ruin the people. There are sufficient guards placed against sedition and licentiousness; for when power is given to this government to suppress these, or for any other purpose, the language it assumes is clear, express, and unequivocal; but when this constitution speaks of privileges, there is an ambiguity, sir, a fatal ambiguity—an ambiguity which is very astonishing. In the clause under consideration, there is the strangest language that I can conceive. I

mean when it says that there shall not be more representatives than one for every 30,000. Now, sir, how easy is it to evade this privilege? "The number shall not exceed one for every 30,000." This may be satisfied by one representative from each state. Let our numbers be ever so great, this immense continent may, by this artful expression, be reduced to have but thirteen representatives. I confess this construction is not natural; but the ambiguity of the expression lays a good ground for a quarrel. Why was it not clearly and unequivocally expressed, that they should be entitled to have one for every 30,000? This would have obviated all disputes; and was this difficult to be done? What is the inference? When population increases, and a state shall send representatives in this proportion, Congress may remand them, because the right of having one for every 30,000 is not clearly expressed. This possibility of reducing the number to one for each state approximates to probability by that other expression, "but each



state shall at least have one representative."

Now, is it not clear that, from the first expression, the number might be reduced so much, that some states should have no representative at all, were it not for the insertion of this last expression? And as this is the only restriction upon them, we may fairly conclude that they may restrain the number to one from each state.

Some minds are agitated by foreign alarms. Happily for us, there is no real danger from Europe: that country is engaged in more arduous business: from that quarter, there is no cause of fear: you may sleep in safety forever for them. Where is the danger? If, sir, there was any, I would recur to the American spirit to defend us—that spirit which has enabled us to surmount the greatest difficulties: to that illustrious spirit I address my most fervent prayer, to prevent our adopting a system destructive to liberty. Let not gentlemen be told, that it is not safe to reject this government. Wherefore is it not safe? We



are told there are dangers; but those dangers are ideal; they cannot be demonstrated. To encourage us to adopt it, they tell us that there is a plain, easy way of getting amendments. When I come to contemplate this part, I suppose that I am mad, or that my countrymen are so. The way to amendment is, in my conception, shut. Let us consider this plain, easy way. "The congress, whenever two-thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this constitution; or, on the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of the several states, shall call a convention for proposing amendments, which, in either case, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several states, or by conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by the congress. Provided, that no amendment which may be made prior to the year 1808, shall, in any manner, affect the first and fourth clauses

in the ninth section of the first article; and that no state, without its consent, shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the senate." Hence it appears that three-fourths of the states must ultimately agree to any amendments that may be necessary. Let us consider the consequences of this. However uncharitable it may appear, yet I must express my opinion, that the most unworthy characters may get into power and prevent the introduction of amendments. Let us suppose (for the case is supposable, possible, and probable), that you happen to deal these powers to unworthy hands; will they relinquish powers already in their possession, or agree to amendments? Two-thirds of the congress, or of the state legislatures, are necessary even to propose amendments. If one-third of these be unworthy men, they may prevent the application for amendments; but a destructive and mischievous feature is, that three-fourths of the state legislatures, or of the state conventions, must concur in the amendments when proposed. In such numerous bodies, there

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alter, or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal." This, sir, is the language of democracy—that a majority of the community have a right to alter their government when found to be oppressive; but how different is the genius of your new constitution from this! How different from the sentiments of freemen, that a contemptible minority can prevent the good of the majority! If, then, gentlemen, standing on this ground, are come to that point, that they are willing to bind themselves and their posterity to be oppressed, I am amazed and inexpressibly astonished. If this be the opinion of the majority, I must submit; but to me, sir, it appears perilous and destructive; I cannot help thinking so: perhaps it may be the result of my age; these may be feelings natural to a man of my years, when the American spirit has left him, and his mental powers, like the members of the body, are decayed. If, sir, amendments are left to the twentieth, or to the tenth part of the people of America,

your liberty is gone forever. We have heard that there is a great deal of bribery practised in the house of commons in England; and that many of the members raise themselves to preferments by selling the rights of the people. But, sir, the tenth part of that body cannot continue oppressions on the rest of the people. English liberty is, in this case, on a firmer foundation than American liberty. It will be easily contrived to procure the opposition of one-tenth of the people to any alteration however judicious.

We drew the spirit of liberty from our British ancestors: by that spirit we have triumphed over every difficulty. But now, sir, the American spirit, assisted by the ropes and chains of consolidation, is about to convert this country into a powerful and mighty empire. If you make the citizens of this country agree to become the subjects of one great consolidated empire of America, your government will not have sufficient energy to keep them together: such a government is incompatible with the

genius of republicanism. There will be no checks, no real balances, in this government. What can avail your specious, imaginary balances; your rope-dancing, chain-rattling, ridiculous, ideal checks and contrivances? But, sir, we are not feared by foreigners: we do not make nations tremble. Would this constitute happiness, or secure liberty? I trust, sir, our political hemisphere will ever direct its operations to the security of those objects. Consider our situation, sir: go to the poor man; ask him what he does: he will inform you that he enjoys the fruits of his labor, under his own fig-tree, with his wife and children around him, in peace and security. Go to every other member of the society; you will find the same tranquil ease and content; you will find no alarms or disturbances! Why, then, tell us of dangers, to terrify us into an adoption of this new form of government? And yet who knows the dangers that this new system may produce? They are out of the sight of the common people: they cannot foresee latent

consequences. I dread the operation of it on the middling and lower classes of people: it is for them I fear the adoption of this system. I fear I tire the patience of the committee; but I beg to be indulged with a few more observations.

When I thus profess myself an advocate for the liberty of the people, I shall be told I am a designing man, that I am to be a great man, that I am to be a demagogue; and many similar illiberal insinuations will be thrown out; but, sir, conscious rectitude outweighs these things with me. I see great jeopardy in this new government: I see none from our present one. I hope some gentleman or other will bring forth, in full array, those dangers, if there be any, that we may see and touch them: I have said that I thought this a consolidated government: I will now prove it. Will the great rights of the people be secured by this government? Suppose it should prove oppressive; how can it be altered? Our bill of rights declares, "that a majority of the community hath an indubitable, un-

alienable and indefeasible right to reform, alter or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal." I have just proved, that one-tenth, or less, of the people of America—a most despicable minority—may prevent this reform, or alteration. Suppose the people of Virginia should wish to alter their government; can a majority of them do it? No, because they are connected with other men; or, in other words, consolidated with other states. When the people of Virginia, at a future day, shall wish to alter their government, though they should be unanimous in this desire, yet they may be prevented therefrom by a despicable minority at the extremity of the United States. The founders of your own constitution made your government changeable; but the power of changing it is gone from you! Whither is it gone? It is placed in the same hands that hold the rights of twelve other states; and those who hold those rights have right and power to keep them. It is not the particular government of Virginia: one of



the leading features of that government is, that a majority can alter it, when necessary for the public good. This government is not a Virginian, but an American government. Is it not therefore a consolidated government?

This constitution is said to have beautiful features; but when I come to examine these features, sir, they appear to me horribly frightful. Among other deformities, it has an awful squinting; it squints toward monarchy: and does not this raise indignation in the breast of every true American? Your president may easily become king. Your senate is so imperfectly constructed, that your dearest rights may be sacrificed by what may be a small minority; and a very small minority may continue forever unchangeably this government, although horribly defective. Where are your checks in this government? Your strongholds will be in the hands of your enemies. It is on a supposition that your American governors shall be honest, that all the good qualities of this government are founded;

but its defective and imperfect construction puts it in their power to perpetrate the worst of mischiefs, should they be bad men. And, sir, would not all the world, from the eastern to the western hemisphere, blame our distracted folly in resting our rights upon the contingency of our rulers being good or bad? Show me that age and country where the rights and liberties of the people were placed on the sole chance of their rulers being good men, without a consequent loss of liberty. I say that the loss of that dearest privilege has ever followed, with absolute certainty, every such mad attempt. If your American chief be a man of ambition and abilities, how easy will it be for him to render himself absolute! The army is in his hands, and, if he be a man of address, it will be attached to him; and it will be the subject of long meditation with him to seize the first auspicious moment to accomplish his design. And, sir, will the American spirit solely relieve you when this happens? I would rather infinitely—and I am sure most of this con-

vention are of the same opinion—have a king, lords and commons, than a government so replete with such insupportable evils. If we make a king, we may prescribe the rules by which he shall rule his people, and interpose such checks as shall prevent him from infringing them; but the president in the field, at the head of his army, can prescribe the terms on which he shall reign master, so far that it will puzzle any American ever to get his neck from under the galling yoke. I cannot, with patience, think of this idea. If ever he violates the laws, one of two things will happen: he will come at the head of his army to carry everything before him; or, he will give bail, or do what Mr. Chief Justice will order him. If he be guilty, will not the recollection of his crimes teach him to make one bold push for the American throne? Will not the immense difference between being master of everything, and being ignominiously tried and punished, powerfully excite him to make this bold push? But, sir, where is the existing force to punish

to my country. I have found my mind hurried on from subject to subject, on this very great occasion. We have all been out of order, from the gentleman who opened today, to myself. I did not come prepared to speak on so multifarious a subject, in so general a manner. I trust you will indulge me another time. Before you abandon the present system, I hope you will consider not only its defects, most maturely, but likewise those of that which you are to substitute for it. May you be fully apprised of the dangers of the latter, not by fatal experience, but by some abler advocate than I.



## CHRONOLOGY

**HENRY CLAY** was born in Hanover County, Virginia, near Richmond, April 12, 1777. In 1781 his father died.

As a boy he clerked in a retail store in Richmond. Afterward was clerk for four years in the High Court of Chancery.

In 1797, at the age of twenty, was admitted to the Bar. Shortly afterward he moved to Lexington, Kentucky.

Was married in 1799.

In 1803 was elected to Kentucky State Legislature.

1806-07 and 1809-11 filled, by appointment, unexpired terms in the United States Senate.

1811-21 and 1823-25 was member of Congress from Kentucky, and during this time was thrice elected Speaker of the House, serving in this capacity a total of ten years.

1814, Peace Commissioner at Ghent.

1824, candidate for President.

1825-29, Secretary of State.

1832-42, United States Senator from Kentucky.

In 1832 and again in 1844, Whig candidate for President.

1849-52, United States Senator from Kentucky.

Died at Washington June 29, 1852.





**HENRY CLAY**

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## HENRY CLAY

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### SPEECH ON INTRODUCING THE COMPROMISE BILL, IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, FEBRUARY 12, 1833

The election of General Jackson to the Presidency for a second term took place in the fall of 1832, and immediately thereafter the State of South Carolina assumed, by the formal edict of a regular convention of her people, to *nullify* and make void the tariff laws of the United States, on the ground that, being imposed for the purpose of protecting American manufactures, they were unconstitutional and invalid. General Jackson promptly issued a vigorous Proclamation, denouncing the act as rebellious and treasonable, and declaring that he should use all the power entrusted to him to vindicate the laws of the Union and cause them to be respected. General Scott, at the head of a considerable regular force, was posted at Charleston, S. C., and every portent of a desperate and bloody struggle was visible. Gen. Jackson's imperious passions were lashed to madness by the Carolina resistance, and the whole physical power of the country but awaited his nod. At this crisis Congress assembled, and the efforts of Mr. Clay were promptly directed to the devising and maturing of some plan to prevent a collision between the Union and the nullifying state, and spare the effusion of blood. Under these circumstances, he projected and presented the bill known as the Compromise Act. On introducing this bill, he addressed the Senate as follows:


I yesterday, sir, gave notice that I should ask leave to introduce a bill to modify the various acts imposing duties on imports.

I at the same time added that I should, with the permission of the Senate, offer an explanation of the principle on which that bill is founded. I owe, sir, an apology to the Senate for this course of action, because, although strictly parliamentary, it is, nevertheless, out of the usual practice of this body; but it is a course which I trust that the Senate will deem to be justified by the interesting nature of the subject. I rise, sir, on this occasion, actuated by no motives of a private nature, by no personal feelings, and for no personal objects; but exclusively in obedience to a sense of the duty which I owe to my country. I trust, therefore, that no one will anticipate on my part any ambitious display of such humble powers as I may possess. It is sincerely my purpose to present a plain, unadorned, and naked statement of facts connected with the measure which I shall have the honor to propose, and with the condition of the country. When I survey, sir, the whole face of our country, I behold all around me evidences of the most gratifying pros-

perity, a prospect which would seem to be without a cloud upon it, were it not that through all parts of the country there exist great dissensions and unhappy distinctions, which, if they can possibly be relieved and reconciled by any broad scheme of legislation adapted to all interests, and regarding the feelings of all sections, ought to be quieted; and leading to which object any measure ought to be well received.

In presenting the modification of the tariff laws, which I am now about to submit, I have two great objects in view. My first object looks to the tariff. I am compelled to express the opinion, formed after the most deliberate reflection, and on full survey of the whole country, that whether rightfully or wrongfully, the tariff stands in imminent danger. If it should be preserved during this session, it must fall at the next session. By what circumstances, and through what causes, has arisen the necessity for this change in the policy of our country, I will not pretend now to elucidate. Others there are who may differ

from the impressions which my mind has received upon this point. Owing, however, to a variety of concurrent causes, the tariff, as it now exists, is in imminent danger, and if the system can be preserved beyond the next session, it must be by some means not now within the reach of human sagacity. The fall of that policy, sir, would be productive of consequences calamitous indeed. When I look to the variety of interests which are involved, to the number of individuals interested, the amount of capital invested, the value of the buildings erected, and the whole arrangement of the business for the prosecution of the various branches of the manufacturing art which have sprung up under the fostering care of this government, I cannot contemplate any evil equal to the sudden overthrow of all those interests. History can produce no parallel to the extent of the mischief which would be produced by such a disaster. The repeal of the edict of Nantes itself was nothing in comparison with it. That condemned to exile and brought to ruin a great number



of persons. The most respectable portion of the population of France was condemned to exile and ruin by that measure. But in my opinion, sir, the sudden repeal of the tariff policy would bring ruin and destruction on the whole people of this country. There is no evil, in my opinion, equal to the consequences which would result from such a catastrophe.

What, sir, are the complaints which unhappily divide the people of this great country? On the one hand, it is said by those who are opposed to the tariff, that it unjustly taxes a portion of the people, and paralyzes their industry; that it is to be a perpetual operation; that there is to be no end to the system; which, right or wrong, is to be urged to their inevitable ruin. And what is the just complaint, on the other hand, of those who support the tariff? It is that the policy of the government is vacillating and uncertain, and that there is no stability in our legislation. Before one set of books are fairly opened, it becomes necessary to close them, and to open

a new set. Before a law can be tested by experiment, another is passed. Before the present law has gone into operation—before it is yet nine months old—passed, as it was, under circumstances of extraordinary deliberation, the fruit of nine months' labor—before we know anything of its experimental effects, and even before it commences its operations, we are required to repeal it. On one side we are urged to repeal a system which is fraught with ruin; on the other side, the check now imposed on enterprise, and the state of alarm in which the public mind has been thrown, render all prudent men desirous, looking ahead a little way, to adopt a state of things, on the stability of which they may have reason to count. Such is the state of feeling on the one side and on the other. I am anxious to find out some principle of mutual accommodation, to satisfy, as far as practicable, both parties—to increase the stability of our legislation; and at some distant day—but not too distant, when we take into view the magnitude of the in-

terests which are involved—to bring down the rate of duties to that revenue standard for which our opponents have so long contended. The basis on which I wish to found this modification, is one of time; and the several parts of the bill to which I am about to call the attention of the Senate are founded on this basis. I propose to give protection to our manufactured articles, adequate protection, for a length of time, which, compared with the length of human life, is very long, but which is short, in proportion to the legitimate discretion of every wise and parental system of government—securing the stability of legislation, and allowing time for a gradual reduction, on one side; and, on the other, proposing to reduce the duties to that revenue standard for which the opponents of the system have so long contended. I will now proceed to lay the provisions of the bill before the Senate, with a view to draw their attention to the true character of the bill. . . .

The memorable first of February is past.

I confess I did feel an unconquerable repugnance to legislation until that day should have passed, because of the consequences that were to ensue. I hoped that the day would go over well. I feel, and I think that we must all confess, we breathe, a freer air than when the restraint was upon us. But this is not the only consideration. South Carolina has practically postponed her ordinance, instead of letting it go into effect, till the fourth of March. Nobody who has noticed the course of events, can doubt that she will postpone it by still further legislation, if Congress should rise without any settlement of this question. I was going to say, my life on it, she will postpone it to a period subsequent to the fourth of March. It is in the natural course of events. South Carolina must perceive the embarrassments of her situation. She must be desirous—it is unnatural to suppose that she is not—to remain in the Union. What! a state whose heroes in its gallant ancestry fought so many glorious battles along with those of the other states



of this Union—a state with which this confederacy is linked by bonds of such a powerful character! I have sometimes fancied what would be her condition if she goes out of this Union; if her five hundred thousand people should at once be thrown upon their own resources. She is out of the Union. What is the consequence? She is an independent power. What then does she do? She must have armies and fleets, and an expensive government—have foreign missions—she must raise taxes—enact this very tariff, which has driven her out of the Union, in order to enable her to raise money, and to sustain the attitude of an independent power. If she should have no force, no navy to protect her, she would be exposed to piratical incursions. Her neighbor, St. Domingo, might pour down a horde of pirates on her borders, and desolate her plantations. She must have her embassies, therefore must she have a revenue. And, let me tell you, there is another consequence—an inevitable one; she has a certain description of persons recognized as

property south of the Potomac, and west of the Mississippi, which would be no longer recognized as such, except within their own limits. This species of property would sink to one-half of its present value, for it is Louisiana and the southwestern states which are her great market.

But I will not dwell on this topic any longer. I say it is utterly impossible that South Carolina ever desired, for a moment, to become a separate and independent state. If the existence of the ordinance, while an act of Congress is pending, is to be considered as a motive for not passing that law, why, this would be found to be a sufficient reason for preventing the passing of any laws. South Carolina, by keeping the shadow of an ordinance ever before us, as she has it in her power to postpone it from time to time, would defeat our legislation forever. I would repeat that, under all the circumstances of the case, the condition of South Carolina is only one of the elements of a combination, the whole of which, together, constitutes a motive of action which ren-

ders it expedient to resort, during the present session of Congress, to some measure in order to quiet and tranquilize the country.

If there be any who want civil war—who want to see the blood of any portion of our countrymen spilt—I am not one of them. I wish to see war of no kind; but, above all, I do not desire to see a civil war. When war begins, whether civil or foreign, no human sight is competent to foresee when, or how, or where it is to terminate. But when a civil war shall be lighted up in the bosom of our own happy land, and armies are marching, and commanders are winning their victories, and fleets are in motion on our coast—tell me, if you can, tell me if any human being can tell its duration. God alone knows where such a war would end. In what a state will be left our institutions? In what state our liberties? I want no war; above all, no war at home.

Sir, I repeat, that I think South Carolina has been rash, intemperate, and greatly in the wrong, but I do not want to disgrace her, nor any other member of this Union.

No, I do not desire to see the lustre of one single star dimmed, of that glorious confederacy which constitutes our political system; still less do I wish to see it blotted out, and its light obliterated forever. Has not the State of South Carolina been one of the members of this Union in "days that tried men's souls"? Have not her ancestors fought alongside our ancestors? Have we not, conjointly, won together many a glorious battle? If we had to go into a civil war with such a state, how would it terminate? Whenever it should have terminated, what would be her condition? If she should ever return to the Union, what would be the condition of her feelings and affections; what the state of the heart of her people? She has been with us before, when her ancestors mingled in the throng of battle, and as I hope our posterity will mingle with hers, for ages and centuries to come, in the united defence of liberty, and for the honor and glory of the Union, *I do not wish to see her degraded or defaced as a member of this confederacy.*

In conclusion, allow me to entreat and implore each individual member of this body to bring into the consideration of this measure, which I have had the honor of proposing, the same love of country which, if I know myself, has actuated me, and the same desire of restoring harmony to the Union, which has prompted this effort. If we can forget for a moment—but that would be asking too much of human nature—if we could suffer, for one moment, party feelings and party causes—and, as I stand here before my God, I declare I have looked beyond those considerations, and regarded only the vast interests of this united people—I should hope that, under such feelings, and with such dispositions, we may advantageously proceed to the consideration of this bill, and heal, before they are yet bleeding, the wounds of our distracted country.

## HENRY CLAY

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### SPEECH ON ARMING FOR WAR WITH ENGLAND, DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DEC. 31, 1811

The patience of the nation having been utterly exhausted by a long series of most flagrant outrages on our rights and independence by Great Britain, in the harassing of our commerce, searching of our vessels, impressment of our seamen, etc., President Madison transmitted to Congress, on its assembling, November 4, 1811, a message recommending decisive measures for the vindication of our national honor and the redress of our wrongs. The subject immediately became the engrossing one, and many members spoke in earnest deprecation of war measures—among them John Randolph, of Virginia, with great energy and eloquence. The committee on foreign relations having reported a series of resolutions echoing the sentiments of the message, and proposing the immediate increase of the army, they were debated at length and adopted. A bill was thereupon framed in and passed by the Senate, proposing to raise thirteen additional regiments for the public service. This bill having reached the House, and being under consideration in Committee of the Whole, Mr. Clay (who had entered the House a new member, aged 34, at the opening of that session, and been immediately chosen speaker by a vote of 75 to 44), rose and addressed the committee as follows:

When the subject of raising an additional military force was discussed some days past, it was the pleasure of the House not to deliberate on it in Committee of the

Whole. I should not complain of this course of proceeding, nor indeed of any other which they might think fit to take on any other occasion; but the effect was to preclude me from participating in debate; from taking upon myself that share of responsibility for measures which it has become necessary to adopt at the present moment; a responsibility from which I shall never shrink at any period or on any subject. I owe it to myself, to my constituents, and to my country to express, on this occasion, my views of the great interests involved in the bill under consideration.

The first question which presents itself, in relation to this bill, is as to the quantum of force which it proposes to raise. Is it too large or too small—too strong or too weak? The contemplated army is, to my mind, too great for peace; and I am fearful, far as it is above the wishes of some of those with whom I generally have the honor to act, that it is too small for the purposes of war. The bill provides for the raising of twenty-five thousand troops;

the bill recently passed was intended to complete the enlistment for six thousand more. The whole would amount to thirty-one thousand. Deducting for sickness, to which raw troops are peculiarly exposed, and for other deficiencies, a reasonable number of these troops, and to give the most favorable result, we shall not raise by both bills more than twenty or twenty-five thousand effective men. Could a country boundless in extent, with a numerous line of forts and garrisons, liable to invasions and predatory incursions at every point, be defended, and at the same time a war carried on, by a less number of regulars than twenty-five thousand? If the legislative councils err in such a case, they ought to err on the side of safety and vigor. The question is—will you embark in a war which shall be feeble and protracted to a great length of time, or will you make a vigorous stroke and put an end to this territorial war at once? Canada is the avowed object. Suppose you conquer Upper Canada, you must leave men behind to



hold it, when you march to Quebec. Your rear must be protected; it would be a new mode of warfare to leave it unprotected! Gentlemen will be deceived, if they calculate upon the treason of the Canadian people. Well, sir, you lay siege to Quebec garrisoned, I am informed, by seven or eight thousand British forces; you must have at least double that number to take possession of the place. Suppose Quebec reduced; high as is my sense of the valor of my countrymen, I do not believe that militia or volunteers could be obtained to retain it for as long a period as would be necessary. But in respect to the question of economy, I conceive that it would be more expedient to raise a large force at once. With an army of twenty-five thousand men, the territorial war would probably terminate in one year; while it would last, waged with eight or ten thousand troops, three or four years. I said the *territorial* war; for it is probable that for years after the enemy shall be driven from the provinces, hostilities may be prosecuted on the ocean. So much

for the quantum of the proposed force. Were I to amplify, as well I might; were I to draw too extensively on the patience of the Committee, they might feel disposed to protest my draft.

I advance to the consideration of the *nature* of the troops. Our republican jealousies; our love of liberty; the danger of standing armies, are themes which have been successfully touched, in discussing the subject before the Committee, at least so far as our feelings are concerned, however little weight they may have produced on our judgment. I do not stand on this floor as the advocate of standing armies in time of peace; but when war becomes essential, I *am* the advocate of raising able and vigorous armies to ensure its success. The danger of armies in peace arises from their idleness and dissipation; their corrupted habits, which mould them to the will of ambitious chieftains. We have been the subject of abuse for years by tourists through this country, whether on horseback or on foot, in prose or in poetry; but

although we may not have exhibited as many great instances of discoveries and improvements in science, as the long established nations of Europe, the mass of our people possess more general political information than any people on earth; such information is universally diffused among us. This circumstance is one security against the ambition of military leaders. Another barrier is derived from the extent of the country, and the millions of people spread over its face. Paris was taken, and all France consequently subjugated. London might be subdued, and England would fall before the conqueror. But the population and strength of this country are concentrated in no one place. Philadelphia may be invaded; New York or Boston may fall; every seaport may be taken; but the country will remain free. The whole of our territory on this side of the Alleghany may be invaded; still liberty will not be subdued. We have or will soon have eighteen state governments, capable and possessing the right to apply their immense pecuniary and

physical military resources to oppose any daring usurper who may attempt to prostrate our liberties. The national government; one or more of the state sovereignties, may be annihilated; the country will yet be safe. We possess another security against the dangers of armies in the great body of militia. I hope to God that ere long we shall see every man proudly shoulder a musket to defend his liberties. Massachusetts at this time presents the noble spectacle of fifty or sixty thousand of her citizens with arms in their hands, ready to point their bayonets to the breast of any tyrant who may attempt to crush their freedom. And with all these securities, do gentlemen seriously apprehend danger from a pitiful army of twenty-five or thirty thousand men? I trust not.

I must beg leave to differ with those gentlemen who have thought it improper to debate upon war in the face of day. It is impossible to conceal the measures of preparation for war. Have gentlemen ever

known of a war between France and Russia, for example, without receiving accounts of its being meditated for weeks and months before it actually took place? You may pass your laws in secret, but you cannot secretly execute them. Men must be raised; can they be enlisted in the dark? I feel no difficulty on this point.

Gentlemen have inquired, what will be gained by the contemplated war? I ask, in turn, what will you not lose by your mongrel state of peace with Great Britain? Do you expect to gain anything in a pecuniary view? No, sir. Look at your treasury reports. We now receive only six millions of revenue annually; and this amount must be diminished in the same proportion as the rigorous execution of the orders in council shall increase. Before these orders existed, we received sixteen millions. We lose, then, to the amount of ten millions of revenue per annum by our present peace. A war would probably produce the repeal of the orders in council; and our revenue would be restored; our

commerce would flourish; our wealth and prosperity would advance. But certain gentlemen tell us to repeal the non-importation, and then we shall have commerce and revenue. Admit that we could be guilty of so gross an act of perfidy, after we have voluntarily pledged our faith to that power which should revoke its hostile edicts, to enforce against its enemy this non-importation; admit this; repeal your laws; and what will be the consequence? We shall present the strange phenomenon of an import without an export trade. We should become bankrupt, if we should thus carry on a trade. Where would our produce find vent? Under the British orders, we cannot send it to the markets of continental Europe. Will Great Britain take our exports? She has no market for them; her people can find use for only a small portion of them. By a continuance of this peace, then, we shall lose our commerce, our character, and a nation's best attribute, our honor. A war will give us commerce and character; and we shall enjoy the proud

consciousness of having discharged our highest duty to our country.

But England, it seems, is fighting the battles of mankind; and we are asked, shall we weaken her magnanimous efforts? For argument's sake, let us concede the fact that the French Emperor is aiming at universal empire; can Great Britain challenge our sympathies, when, instead of putting forth her arms to protect the world, she has converted the war into a means of self-aggrandizement; when, under pretence of defending them, she has destroyed the commerce and trampled on the rights of every nation; when she has attempted to annihilate every vestige of the public maritime code of which she professes to be the champion? Shall we bear the cuffs and scoffs of British arrogance, because we may entertain chimerical fears of French subjugation? Shall we swallow the potion of British poison, lest we may be presented with the imperial dose? Are we called upon to bow to the mandates of royal insolence, as a preparation to contend against

Gallic usurpation? Who ever learned in the school of base submission the lessons of noble freedom, and courage, and independence? Look at Spain. Did she secure her independence by submitting, in the first instance, to the dictates of imperial usurpations? No, sir. If she had resisted the first intrusion into her councils, her monarch would not at this time be a miserable victim in the dungeons of Marseilles. We cannot secure our independence of one power by a dastardly submission to the will of another. But look at our own history. Our ancestors of the Revolution resisted the first encroachments of British tyranny. They foresaw that by submitting to pay an illegal tax, contemptible as that was in itself, their liberties would ultimately be subverted. Consider the progress of the present disputes with England. For what were we contending the other day? For the indirect colonial carrying trade. That has vanished. For what are we now deliberating? For the direct export and import trade; the trade



in our own cotton, and tobacco, and fish. Give this up, and tomorrow we must take up arms for our right to pass from New York to New Orleans; from the upper country on James River to Richmond. Sir, when did submission to one wrong induce an adversary to cease his encroachments on the party submitting? But we are told that we ought only to go to war when our territory is invaded. How much better than invasion is the blocking of our very ports and harbors; insulting our towns; plundering our merchants, and scouring our coasts? If our fields are surrounded, are they in a better condition than if invaded? When the murderer is at our doors, shall we meanly skulk to our cells? Or shall we boldly oppose him at his entrance?

I could wish the past were buried in oblivion. But we cannot shut our eyes. The other day, the pretence for the orders in council was retaliation for the French edicts. The existence of these edicts was made the ground of Sir William Scott for

the condemnation of the Fox and others. It will be recollected that Sir William had delayed his sentence in the celebrated case, that proof of the repeal of the French decrees might be produced. They were produced. Nevertheless the condemnation took place. But the plea of retaliation has given way to other pretexts and other claims. To the astonishment of all mankind, the British envoy has demanded as a preliminary to the revocation of the orders in council that the United States shall cause the continental ports to be opened for the admission of British manufactures! We are required to compel France to repeal her *municipal code* itself! Sir, these are some of the motives of the British hostility towards our commerce. She sickens at our prosperity; she is jealous of us; she dreads our rivalry on the ocean. If you doubt this, look at our trade in 1806. Our trade with England was twelve or thirteen millions in her favor. We bought fifty millions worth of her manufactures, and supplied the raw materials

for those very manufactures. We furnished her with the necessities of life, and in exchange, accepted her luxuries. How was our trade with France and Holland? Our exports to both these countries amounted to eighteen millions, our imports to twenty-five millions. Considering the superiority in trade with us which Great Britain enjoyed over her rival, would she have relinquished that superiority, would she have given up her profitable trade, for the single purpose of humbling that of her antagonist? Would she have hazarded the evils of a war with this country for this object? No, sir, she sees in our numberless ships, whose sails spread upon every sea; she perceives in our hundred and twenty thousand gallant tars, the seeds of a naval force, which in thirty years, will rival her on her own element. She therefore commences the odious system of impressment, of which no language can paint my indignant execration; she dares to attempt the subversion of the personal freedom of our mariners. She aims at depressing our commerce, which

she foresees will induce our seamen to enter her service, will impair the means of cherishing our navy, of protecting and extending our commerce, and will at the same time raise her own power.

Sir, we are told this government is not calculated to stand the shock of war; that gentlemen will lose their seats in this and the other House; that our benches will be filled by other men, who after we have carried on the war, will make for us an ignominious peace. I cannot believe that to retain their seats is the extent of the *amor patriæ* of gentlemen in this House. Can we let our brave countrymen, a Daviess and his associates in arms, perish in manfully fighting our battles, while we meanly cling to our places? But I cannot persuade myself that the nation will be ungrateful. I am convinced that when they know that their government has been strictly impartial towards the belligerents—for surely no gentleman in this House can be so base as to ascribe partiality or other improper motives to us—when they perceive the

sincere and persevering exertions of their government to preserve peace; they will continue to adhere to it, even in an unsuccessful war to defend their rights, to assert their honor, the dignity and independence of the country. But my ideas of duty are such, that when my rights are invaded, I must advance to their defence, let what may be the consequence; even if death itself were to be my certain fate.

I must apologize for having trespassed so long upon the patience of the Committee. I trust that I have fully established these three positions: that the quantum of the force proposed by the bill is not too great—that its nature is such as the contemplated war calls for; and that the object of the war is justified by every consideration of justice, of interest, of honor, and love of country. Unless the object is attained by peaceful means, I hope that war will be waged before the close of the session.

## HENRY CLAY

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### SPEECH ON THE CHARGE OF CORRUPTION DELIVERED AT LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY, JULY 12, 1827

Mr. Clay visited Kentucky in 1827, while Secretary of State under Mr. Adams, and was received by large gatherings of his former constituents and fellow-citizens, who insisted on meeting him around the festive board. At Paris, Bourbon County, in Woodford County, and at Lexington, he met and addressed large assemblages of the people. At the latter place, the following toast was given:

*"Our distinguished guest, Henry Clay—The furnace of persecution may be heated seven times hotter, and seventy times more he will come out unscathed by the fire of malignity, brighter to all and dearer to his friends; while his enemies shall sink with the dross of their own vile materials."*

Mr. Clay, after the above toast had been drunk, addressed the company as follows:

MR. PRESIDENT, FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:

I beg permission to offer my hearty thanks, and to make my respectful acknowledgments, for the affectionate reception which has been given me during my present visit to my old Congressional District, and for this hospitable and honorable testimony of your esteem and confidence. And

I thank you especially for the friendly sentiments and feelings expressed in the toast which you have just done me the honor to drink. I always had the happiness of knowing that I enjoyed, in a high degree, the attachment of that portion of my fellow-citizens whom I formerly represented; but I should never have been sensible of the strength and ardor of their affection, except for the extraordinary character of the times. For near two years and a half I have been assailed with a rancor and bitterness which have few examples. I have found myself the particular object of concerted and concentrated abuse; and others, thrusting themselves between you and me, have dared to arraign me for treachery to your interests. But my former constituents, unaffected by the calumnies which have been so perseveringly circulated to my prejudice, have stood by me with a generous confidence and a noble magnanimity. The measure of their regard and confidence has risen with, and even surpassed, that of the malevolence, great as it is, of

my personal and political foes. I thank you, gentlemen, who are a large portion of my late constituents. I thank you, and and every one of them, with all my heart, for the manly support which I have uniformly received. It has cheered and consoled me, amidst all my severe trials; and may I not add, that it is honorable to the generous hearts and enlightened heads who have resolved to protect the character of an old friend and faithful servant?

The numerous manifestations of your confidence and attachment will be among the latest and most treasured recollections of my life. They impose upon me obligations which can never be weakened or cancelled. One of these obligations is that I should embrace every fair opportunity to vindicate that character which you have so generously sustained, and to evince to you and to the world that you have not yielded to the impulses of a blind and enthusiastic sentiment. I feel that I am, on all fit occasions, especially bound to vindicate myself to my former constituents.



It was as *their* representative, it was in fulfilment of a high trust which *they* confided to me, that I have been accused of violating the most sacred of duties—of treating their wishes with contempt, and their interests with treachery. Nor is this obligation, in my conception of its import, at all weakened by the dissolution of the relations which heretofore existed between us. I would instantly resign the place I hold in the councils of the nation, and directly appeal to the suffrages of my late constituents, as a candidate for re-election, if I did know that my foes are of that class whom one rising from the dead cannot convince, whom nothing can silence, and who wage a war of extermination. On the issue of such an appeal, they would redouble their abuse of you and of me, for their hatred is common to us both.

They have compelled me so often to be the theme of my addresses to the people, that I should have willingly abstained, on this festive occasion, from any allusion to this subject, but for a new and imposing

form which the calumny against me has recently assumed. I am again put on my defence, not of any new charge, nor by any new adversary; but of the old charges, clad in a new dress, and exhibited by an open and undisguised enemy. The fictitious names have been stricken from the foot of the indictment, and that of a known and substantial prosecutor has been voluntarily offered. Undaunted by the formidable name of that prosecutor, I will avail myself, with your indulgence, of this fit opportunity of free and unreserved intercourse with you, as a large number of my late constituents, to make some observations on the past and present state of the question. When evidence shall be produced, as I have now a clear right to demand, in support of the accusation, it will be the proper time for me to take such notice of it as its nature shall require.

## HENRY CLAY

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### SPEECH ON RETIRING FROM OFFICE, DELIVERED AT WASHINGTON, MARCH 7, 1829

After the triumphant election of General Jackson as President in 1828, and his imposing inauguration to that office, March 4th, 1829, a number of the friends of Mr. Clay (who had resigned the post of secretary of state the day before that inauguration, and was preparing to return to his Western home) insisted that he should meet them around the festive board prior to his departure. To this request he acceded. The fifth toast was:

"Health, prosperity, and happiness to our highly valued and esteemed guest and fellow-citizen, Henry Clay. Whatever the future destination of his life, he has done enough for honor, and need desire no higher reward than the deep-seated affection and respect of his friends and his country."

This having been received with profound enthusiastic feeling, Mr. Clay arose and addressed the company as follows:

In rising, Mr. President, to offer my respectful acknowledgments for the honors of which I am here the object, I must ask the indulgence of yourself and the other gentlemen now assembled for an unaffected embarrassment, which is more sensibly felt than it can be distinctly expressed. This city has been the theatre of the greater

portion of my public life. You, and others whom I now see, have been spectators of my public course and conduct. You and they are, if I may borrow a technical expression from an honorable profession of which you and I are both members, jurors of the vicinage. To a judgment rendered by those who have thus long known me, and by others, though not of the panel, who have possessed equal opportunities of forming correct opinions, I most cheerfully submit. If the weight of human testimony should be estimated by the intelligence and respectability of the witness, and the extent of his knowledge of the matter on which he testifies, the highest consideration is due to that which has been this day spontaneously given. I shall ever cherish it with the most grateful recollection and look back upon it with proud satisfaction.

I should be glad to feel that I could with any propriety abstain from any allusion at this time and at this place to public affairs. But considering the occasion which has brought us together, the events which have

preceded it, and the influence which they may exert upon the destinies of our country, my silence might be misinterpreted, and I think it therefore proper that I should embrace this first public opportunity which I have had of saying a few words since the termination of the late memorable and embittered contest. It is far from my wish to continue or to revive the agitation with which that contest was attended. It is ended, for good or for evil. The nation wants repose. A majority of the people has decided, and from their decision there can and ought to be no appeal. Bowing, as I do, with profound respect to them, and to this exercise of their sovereign authority, I may nevertheless be allowed to retain and to express my own unchanged sentiments, even if they should not be in perfect coincidence with theirs. It is a source of high gratification to me to believe that I share these sentiments in common with more than half a million of freemen, possessing a degree of virtue, of intelligence, of religion, and of genuine patriotism, which, without

disparagement to others, is unsurpassed, in the same number of men in this or any other country, in this or any other age.

I deprecated the election of the present President of the United States, because I believed he had neither the temper, the experience, nor the attainments requisite to discharge the complicated and arduous duties of chief magistrate. I deprecated it still more, because his elevation, I believed, would be the result exclusively of admiration and gratitude for military service, without regard to indispensable civil qualifications. I can neither retract, nor alter, nor modify any opinion which, on these subjects, I have at any time heretofore expressed. I thought I beheld in his election an awful foreboding of the fate which, at some future (I pray to God that, if it ever arrive, it may be some far distant) day was to befall this infant republic. All past history has impressed on my mind this solemn apprehension. Nor is it effaced or weakened by contemporaneous events passing upon

our own favored continent. It is remarkable that, at this epoch, at the head of eight of the nine independent governments established in both Americas, military officers have been placed, or have placed themselves. General Lavalle has, by military force, subverted the republic of La Plata. General Santa Cruz is the chief magistrate of Bolivia; Colonel Pinto of Chili; General Lamar of Peru, and General Bolivar of Columbia. Central America, rent in pieces, and bleeding at every pore from wounds inflicted by contending military factions, is under the alternate sway of their chiefs. In the government of our nearest neighbor, an election, conducted according to all the requirements of their constitution, has terminated with a majority of the states in favor of Pedrazza, the civil candidate. An insurrection was raised in behalf of his military rival; the cry, not exactly of a bargain, but of corruption, was sounded; the election was annulled, and a reform effected by proclaiming General Guerrero, having only a minority of the

states, duly elected President. The thunders from the surrounding forts, and the acclamations of the assembled multitude, on the fourth, told us what general was at the head of our affairs. It is true, and in this respect we are happier than some of the American states, that his election has not been brought about by military violence. The forms of the constitution have yet remained inviolate.

In re-asserting the opinions which I hold, nothing is further from my purpose than to treat with the slightest disrespect those of my fellow-citizens, here or elsewhere, who may entertain opposite sentiments. The fact of claiming and exercising the free and independent expression of the dictates of my own deliberate judgment affords the strongest guarantee of my full recognition of their corresponding privilege.

A majority of my fellow-citizens, it would seem, do not perceive the dangers which I apprehended from the example. Believing that they are not real, or that we have some security against their effect, which



ancient and modern republics have not found, that majority, in the exercise of their incontestable right of suffrage, have chosen for chief magistrate a citizen who brings into that high trust no qualification other than military triumphs.

That citizen has done much injustice—wanton, unprovoked, and unatoned injustice. It was inflicted, as I must ever believe, for the double purpose of gratifying private resentment and promoting personal ambition. When, during the late canvass, he came forward in the public prints under his proper name, with his charge against me, and summoned before the public tribunal his friend and his only witness to establish it, the anxious attention of the whole American people was directed to the testimony which that witness might render. He promptly obeyed the call and testified to what he knew. He could say nothing, and he said nothing which cast the slightest shade upon my honor or integrity. What he did say was the reverse of any implication of me. Then all just

and impartial men, and all who had faith in the magnanimity of my accuser, believed that he would voluntarily make a public acknowledgment of his error. How far this reasonable expectation has been fulfilled, let his persevering and stubborn silence attest. But my relations to that citizen by a recent event are now changed. He is the chief magistrate of my country, invested with large and extensive powers, the administration of which may conduce to its prosperity or occasion its adversity. Patriotism enjoins as a duty, that whilst he is in that exalted station, he should be treated with decorum, and his official acts be judged of in a spirit of candor. Suppressing, as far as I can, a sense of my personal wrong—willing even to forgive him, if his own conscience and our common God can acquit him—and entertaining for the majority which has elected him, and for the office which he fills, all the deference which is due from a private citizen, I most anxiously hope that under his guidance the great interests of our country, foreign

and domestic, may be upheld, our free institutions be unimpaired, and the happiness of the nation be continued and increased.

While I am prompted by an ardent devotion to the welfare of my country sincerely to express this hope, I make no pledges, no promises, no threats, and I must add, I have no confidence. My public life, I trust, furnishes the best guarantee for my faithful adherence to those great principles of external and internal policy to which it has been hitherto zealously dedicated. Whether I shall ever hereafter take any part in the public councils or not depends upon circumstances beyond my control. Holding the principle that a citizen, as long as a single pulsation remains, is under an obligation to exert his utmost energies in the service of his country, if necessary, whether in private or public station, my friends here and everywhere may rest assured that, in either condition, I shall stand erect, with a spirit unconquered, whilst life endures, ready to second

their exertions in the cause of liberty, the union, and the national prosperity.

Before I sit down I avail myself with pleasure of this opportunity to make my grateful acknowledgments for the courtesies and friendly attentions which I have uniformly experienced from the inhabitants of this city. A free and social intercourse with them, during a period of more than twenty years, is about to terminate, without any recollection on my part of a single painful collision, and without leaving behind me, as far as I know, a solitary personal enemy. If, in the sentiment with which I am about to conclude, I do not give a particular expression to the feelings inspired by the interchange of civilities and friendly offices, I hope the citizens of Washington will be assured that their individual happiness and the growth and prosperity of this city will ever be objects of my fervent wishes. In the sentiment which I shall presently offer, they are indeed comprehended. For the welfare of this city is indissolubly associated with that

of our Union, and the preservation of our liberty. I request permission to propose:  
**LET US NEVER DESPAIR OF THE AMERICAN  
REPUBLIC.**

## CHRONOLOGY

THOMAS JEFFERSON was born at Shadwell, Albemarle County, Virginia, April, 1743. Was the son of a wealthy planter. Up to the age of 14, was under the care of a private tutor, and then spent two years in a private school.

1760-62, was a student at William & Mary College. 1762, began the study of law under George Wythe, but did not apply for admission to the bar until 1767. In connection with the practice of law, he operated his plantation, which consisted of five thousand acres.

1769-75, member of the Virginia House of Burgesses. 1775-76, member of the Continental Congress.

In 1776 drafted the Declaration of Independence. 1776-79, member of the Virginia House of Burgesses. 1779-81, Governor of Virginia. 1783-84, member of Congress from Virginia. 1784-89, United States Minister to France.

1789-93, Secretary of State. 1797-1801, Vice-President of the United States. 1801-09, President of the United States.

1809-26, lived at Monticello, and although in private life, took an active interest in public affairs. It was during this period that he founded the University of Virginia.

Died at Monticello, Albemarle County, Virginia, July 4, 1826.

# THOMAS JEFFERSON

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FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS DELIVERED IN  
WASHINGTON MARCH 4, 1801

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:

Called upon to undertake the duties of the first executive office of our country, I avail myself of the presence of that portion of my fellow-citizens, which is here assembled, to express my grateful thanks for the favor with which they have been pleased to look towards me, to declare a sincere consciousness that the task is above my talents, and that I approach it with those anxious and awful presentiments, which the greatness of the charge, and the weakness of my powers so justly inspire. A rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land, traversing all the seas with the rich productions of their industry; engaged in commerce with nations who feel power and forget right, advancing rapidly to destinies

beyond the reach of mortal eye; when I contemplate these transcendent objects, and see the honor, the happiness, and the hopes of this beloved country committed to the issue and the auspices of this day, I shrink from the contemplation and humble myself before the magnitude of the undertaking. Utterly, indeed, should I despair, did not the presence of many whom I here see remind me that in the other high authorities provided by our Constitution, I shall find resources of wisdom, of virtue, and of zeal, on which to rely under all difficulties. To you, then, gentlemen, who are charged with the sovereign functions of legislation, and to those associated with you, I look with encouragement for that guidance and support which may enable us to steer with safety the vessel in which all are embarked, amidst the conflicting elements of a troubled world.

During the contest of opinion through which we have passed, the animation of discussions and exertions has sometimes worn an aspect which might impose on



strangers unused to think freely, and to speak and to write what they think; but this being now decided by the voice of the nation, announced according to the rules of the Constitution, all will of course arrange themselves under the will of the law, and unite in one common effort for the common good. All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle, that, though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect; and to violate would be oppression. Let us then, fellow-citizens, unite with one heart and one mind; let us restore to social intercourse that harmony and affection, without which, liberty, and even life itself, are but dreary things; and let us reflect, that having banished from our land that religious intolerance under which mankind so long bled and suffered, we have yet gained little if we countenance a political intolerance, as despotic as wicked, and capable of as bitter and bloody persecu-

tions. During the throes and convulsions of the ancient world, during the agonizing spasms of infuriated man, seeking through blood and slaughter his long lost liberty, it was not wonderful that the agitation of the billows should reach even this distant and peaceful shore, that this should be more felt and feared by some and less by others, and should divide opinions as to measures of safety; but every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all republicans, all federalists. If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this union, or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated, where reason is left free to combat it. I know, indeed, that some honest men fear that a republican government cannot be strong; that this government is not strong enough. But would the honest patriot, in the full tide of successful experiment, abandon a government which

has so far kept us free and firm, in the theoretic and visionary fear that this government, the world's best hope, may, by possibility, want energy to preserve itself? I trust not; I believe this, on the contrary, the strongest government on earth. I believe it the only one where every man at the call of the law would fly to the standard of the law, and would meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern. Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he then be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels, in the form of kings, to govern him? Let history answer this question. Let us, then, with courage and confidence pursue our own federal and republican principles, our attachment to union and representative government. Kindly separated by nature and a wide ocean from the exterminating havoc of one-quarter of the globe, too high-minded to endure the degradations of the others; possessing a chosen country, with room enough for

descendants to the hundredth and thousandth generation; entertaining a due sense of our equal right to the use of our own faculties, to the acquisitions of our own industry, to honor and confidence from our fellow-citizens, resulting not from birth, but from our actions; and their sense of them enlightened by a benign religion; professed indeed, and practised in various forms, yet all of them inculcating honesty, truth, temperance, gratitude, and the love of man, acknowledging and adoring an overruling Providence, which, by all its dispensations, proves that it delights in the happiness of man here, and his greater happiness hereafter; with all these blessings, what more is necessary to make us a happy and prosperous people? Still one thing more, fellow-citizens—a wise and prudent government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of

good government; and this is necessary to close the circle of our felicities.

About to enter, fellow-citizens, on the exercise of duties which comprehend everything dear and valuable to you, it is proper you should understand what I deem the essential principles of our government, and consequently, those which ought to shape its administration. I will compress them within the narrowest compass they will bear, stating the general principle, but not all its limitations. Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations; entangling alliances with none; the support of state governments in all their rights, as the most competent administration for our domestic concerns, and the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies; the preservation of the general government in its whole constitutional vigor, as the sheet-anchor of our peace at home and safety abroad; a jealous care of the right of election by the people; a mild and safe

corrective of abuses, which are lopped by the sword of revolution, where peaceable remedies are unprovided; absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority, the vital principle of republics, from which is no appeal but to force, the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism; a well-disciplined militia—our best reliance in peace, and for the first moments of war, till regulars may relieve them; the supremacy of the civil over the military authority; economy in the public expense, that labor may be lightly burthened; the honest payment of our debts and sacred preservation of the public faith; encouragement of agriculture, and commerce as its handmaid; the diffusion of information, and arraignment of all abuses at the bar of the public reason; freedom of religion; freedom of the press, and freedom of the person, under protection of the habeas corpus, and trial by juries impartially selected. These principles form the bright constellation which has gone before us and guided our steps through an age of

revolution and reformation. The wisdom of all our sages and blood of our heroes have been devoted to their attainment; they should be the creed of our political faith, the text of civic instruction, the touchstone by which to try the services of those whom we trust; and, should we wander from them in moments of error or of alarm, let us hasten to retrace our steps, and regain the road which alone leads to peace, liberty, and safety.

I repair, then, fellow-citizens, to the post you have assigned me. With experience enough in subordinate offices to have seen the difficulties of this, the greatest of all, I have learned to expect that it will rarely fall to the lot of imperfect man to retire from this station with the reputation and the favor which bring him into it. Without pretensions to that high confidence you reposed in your first and great revolutionary character, whose pre-eminent services had entitled him to the first place in his country's love, and destined for him the fairest page in the volume of faithful history, I

ask so much confidence only as will give firmness and effect to the legal administration of your affairs. I shall often go wrong through defect of judgment; when right, I shall often be thought wrong by those whose positions will not command a view of the whole ground. I ask your indulgence for my own errors, which will never be intentional; and your support against the errors of others, who may condemn what they would not, if seen in all its parts. The approbation implied by your suffrage is a great consolation to me for the past; and my future solicitude will be to retain the good opinion of those who have bestowed it in advance; to conciliate that of others, by doing them all the good in my power; and to be instrumental to the freedom and happiness of all.

Relying, then, on the patronage of your good will, I advance with obedience to the work, ready to retire from it whenever you become sensible how much better choices it is in your power to make; and may that infinite Power, which rules the destinies of



the universe, lead our councils to what is best, and give them a favorable issue for your peace and prosperity.

# THOMAS JEFFERSON

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## SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS DELIVERED IN WASHINGTON MARCH 4, 1805

Proceeding, fellow-citizens, to that qualification which the Constitution requires, before my entrance on the charge again conferred on me, it is my duty to express the deep sense I entertain of this new proof of confidence from my fellow-citizens at large, and the zeal with which it inspires me so to conduct myself as may best satisfy their just expectations.

On taking this station on a former occasion, I declared the principles on which I believed it my duty to administer the affairs of our commonwealth. My conscience tells me that I have on every occasion acted up to that declaration, according to its obvious import, and to the understanding of every candid mind.

In the transaction of your foreign affairs, we have endeavored to cultivate the

friendship of all nations, and especially of those with which we have the most important relations. We have done them justice on all occasions, favored where favor was lawful, and cherished mutual interests and intercourse on fair and equal terms. We are firmly convinced, and we act on that conviction, that with nations, as with individuals, our interests, soundly calculated, will ever be found inseparable from our moral duties. And history bears witness to the fact that a just nation is trusted on its word, when recourse is had to armaments and wars to bridle others.

At home, fellow-citizens, you best know whether we have done well or ill. The suppression of unnecessary offices, of useless establishments and expenses, enabled us to discontinue our internal taxes. These, covering our land with officers, and opening our doors to their intrusions, had already begun that process of domiciliary vexation, which, once entered, is scarcely to be restrained from reaching successively every article of produce and of property. If, among

these taxes, some minor ones fell, which had not been inconvenient, it was because their amount would not have paid the officers who collected them, and because, if they had any merit, the state authorities might adopt them instead of others less approved.

The remaining revenue on the consumption of foreign articles is paid chiefly by those who can afford to add foreign luxuries to domestic comforts. Being collected on our seaboard and frontiers only, and incorporated with the transactions of our mercantile citizens, it may be the pleasure and the pride of an American to ask what farmer, what mechanic, what laborer ever sees a tax gatherer of the United States? These contributions enable us to support the current expenses of the government, to fulfill contracts with foreign nations, to extinguish the native right of soil within our limits, to extend those limits, and to apply such a surplus to our public debts, as places at a short day their final redemption, and that redemption once effected, the revenue thereby

liberated, may by a just reparation among the states, and a corresponding amendment of the Constitution, be applied in time of peace to rivers, canals, roads, arts, manufactories, education and other great objects within each state. In time of war, if injustice by ourselves or others must sometimes produce war, increased population and consumption, and aided by other resources, reserved for that crisis, it may meet within the year all the expenses of the year, without encroaching on the rights of future generations, by burthening them with the debts of the past. War will then be but a suspension of useful works, and a return to the progress of improvement.

I have said, fellow-citizens, that the income reserved had enabled us to extend our limits; but that extension may possibly pay for itself before we are called upon, and in the meantime, may keep down the accruing interest. In all events, it will replace the advances we shall have made. I know that the acquisition of Louisiana had been disapproved of by some, from a

candid apprehension that the enlargement of our territory may endanger its union. But who can limit the extent to which the federative principle may operate effectively? The larger our association, the less will it be shaken by local passions. And in any view, is it not better that the opposite bank of the Mississippi should be settled by our own brethren and children, than by strangers of another family? With which shall we be most likely to live in harmony and friendly intercourse?

In matters of religion I have considered that its free exercise is placed by the Constitution, independent of the powers of the general government. I have therefore undertaken, on no occasion, to prescribe the religious exercises suited to it; but have left them as the Constitution found them, under the direction and discipline of the state or church authorities acknowledged by the several religious societies.

The aboriginal inhabitants of these countries I have regarded with the commiseration their history inspires. Endowed with

the faculties and the rights of men, breathing an ardent love of liberty and independence, and occupying a country which left them no desire but to be undisturbed, the stream of overflowing population from other regions directed itself on these shores. Without power to divert, or habits to contend against it, they have been overwhelmed by the current, or driven before it. Now reduced within limits too narrow for the hunter's state, humanity enjoins us to teach them agriculture and the domestic arts; to encourage them to maintain their place in existence, and to prepare them in time for that state of society, which, to bodily comforts, adds the improvement of the mind and morals. We have therefore liberally furnished them with the implements of husbandry and household use: we have placed among them instructors in the arts of first necessity; and they are covered with the aegis of the law against aggressors from among ourselves.

But the endeavors to enlighten them on the fate which awaits their present course

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of life, to induce them to exercise their reason, follows its dictates, and change their pursuits with the change of circumstances, have powerful obstacles to encounter. They are combatted by the habits of their bodies, prejudices of their minds, ignorance, pride, and the influence of interested and crafty individuals among them, who feel themselves something in the present order of things, and fear to become nothing in any other. These persons inculcate a sanctimonious reverence for the customs of their ancestors; that whatsoever they did must be done through all time; that reason is a false guide; and to advance under its counsel in their physical, moral or political condition is perilous innovation; that their duty is to remain as their Creator made them, ignorance being safety, and knowledge full of danger. In short, my friends, among them also is seen the action and counter-action of good sense and of bigotry. They too have their anti-philosophists, who find an interest in keeping things in their present state; who dread reformation,



and exert all their faculties to maintain the ascendancy of habit over the duty of improving our reason and obeying its mandates.

In giving these outlines I do not mean, fellow-citizens, to arrogate to myself the merit of the measures. That is due, in the first place, to the reflecting character of our citizens at large, who, by the weight of public opinion, influence and strengthen the public measures. It is due to the sound discretion with which they select from among themselves those to whom they confide the legislative duties. It is due to the zeal and wisdom of the characters thus selected, who lay the foundations of public happiness in wholesome laws, the execution of which alone remains for others; and it is due to the able and faithful auxiliaries, whose patriotism has associated them with me in the executive functions.

During this course of administration, and in order to disturb it, the artillery of the press has been levelled against us, charged with whatsoever its licentiousness could

devise or dare. These abuses of an institution so important to freedom and science are deeply to be regretted, inasmuch as they tend to lessen its usefulness, and to sap its safety. They might perhaps have been corrected by the wholesome punishments referred to, and provided by, the laws of the several states against falsehood and defamation. But public duties more urgent press on the time of public servants, and the offenders have therefore been left to find their punishment in the public indignation.

Nor was it uninteresting to the world that an experiment should be fairly and fully made, whether freedom of discussion, unaided by power, is not sufficient for the propagation and protection of truth? Whether a government, conducting itself in the true spirit of the Constitution, with zeal and purity, and doing no act which it would be unwilling the whole world should witness, can be written down with falsehood and defamation? The experiment has been tried. You have witnessed the scene. Our fellow-citizens have looked on cool and

collected. They saw the latent source from which these outrages proceeded. They gathered around the public functionaries; and when the Constitution called them to the decision by suffrage, they pronounced their verdict, honorable to those who had served them, and consolatory to the friend of man, who believes he may be entrusted with the control of his own affairs.

No inference is here intended that the laws provided by the state against false and defamatory publications should not be enforced. He who has time renders a service to public morals and public tranquillity in reforming these abuses by the salutary coercions of the law. But the experiment is noted to prove, that since truth and reason have maintained their ground against false opinions, in league with false facts, the press, confined to truth, needs no other legal restraint. The public judgment will correct false reasonings and opinions on a full hearing of all parties, and no other definite line can be drawn between the inestimable liberty of the press, and its

demoralizing licentiousness. If there be still improprieties which this rule would not restrain, its supplement must be sought in the censorship of public opinion.

Contemplating the union of sentiment now manifested so generally as auguring harmony and happiness to our future course, I offer to our country sincere congratulations. With those too not yet rallied to the same point, the disposition to do so is gaining strength. Facts are piercing through the veil drawn over them; and our doubting brethren will at length see that the mass of their fellow-citizens, with whom they cannot yet resolve to act, as to principles and measures, think as they think, and desire what they desire. That our wish, as well as theirs, is that the public efforts may be directed honestly to the public good, that peace be cultivated, civil and religious liberty unassailed, law and order preserved, equality of rights maintained, and that state of property equal or unequal, which results to every man from his own industry or that of his fathers. When satisfied of

these views, it is not in human nature that they should not approve and support them. In the meantime, let us cherish them with patient affection. Let us do them justice, and more than justice, in all competitions of interest; and we need not doubt that truth, reason, and their own interest will at length prevail, will gather them into the fold of their country, and will complete that entire union of opinion, which gives to a nation the blessings of harmony and the benefit of all its strength.

I shall now enter on the duties to which my fellow-citizens have again called me, and shall proceed in the spirit of those principles which they have approved. I fear not that my motive of interest may lead me astray: I am sensible of no passion which could seduce me knowingly from the path of justice; but the weaknesses of human nature, and the limits of my own understanding will produce errors of judgment sometimes injurious to your interests. I shall need, therefore, all the indulgence I have heretofore experienced; the want of

it will certainly not lessen with increasing years. I shall need, too, the favor of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our fathers, as Israel of old, from their native land, and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessities and comforts of life; who has covered our infancy with his providence and our riper years with his wisdom and power: to whose goodness I ask you to join with me in supplications, that he will so enlighten the minds of your servants, guide their councils, and prosper their measures, that whatsoever they do, shall result in your good, and shall secure to you the peace, friendship and approbation of all nations.



## CHRONOLOGY

**JAMES MADISON** was born at Fort Conway, Virginia, March 16, 1751.

In 1769 entered Princeton College, from which he was graduated in 1771, whereupon he began the study of law.

In 1776 was delegate to the Revolutionary Convention of Virginia. 1780-83, delegate to Congress from Virginia.

1784, elected to the Virginia Legislature, and in 1787 was a member of the Constitutional Convention. Was the leader of the Federalists in the Ratifying Convention of Virginia.

1789-97, a member of the House of Representatives. In 1798 drew up the "Virginia Resolutions."

From 1801-09, Secretary of State. 1809-17, President of the United States.

1812, declared war with Great Britain.

Upon his retirement from the office of the President, he went to Montpelier, Virginia, where the last twenty years of his life were spent in quiet and leisure.

Died at Montpelier, June 28, 1836.



## JAMES MADISON

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FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS DELIVERED IN  
WASHINGTON MARCH 4, 1809

Unwilling to depart from examples of the most revered authority, I avail myself of the occasion now presented to express the profound impression made on me by the call of my country to the station, to the duties of which I am about to pledge myself by the most solemn of sanctions.

So distinguished a mark of confidence, proceeding from the deliberate and tranquil suffrage of a free and virtuous nation, would under any circumstances have commanded my gratitude and devotion; as well as filled me with an awful sense of the trust to be assumed. Under the various circumstances which give peculiar solemnity to the existing period, I feel that both the honor and the responsibility allotted to me are inexpressibly enhanced.

The present situation of the world is

indeed without a parallel, and that of our own country full of difficulties. The pressure of these, too, is the more severely felt, because they have fallen upon us at a moment when national prosperity being at a height not before attained, the contrast resulting from the change has been rendered the more striking.

Under the benign influence of our republican institutions, and the maintenance of peace with all nations, whilst so many of them were engaged in bloody and wasteful wars, the fruits of a just policy were enjoyed in an unrivalled growth of our faculties and resources. Proofs of this were seen in the improvements of agriculture; in the successful enterprises of commerce; in the progress of manufactures and useful arts; in the increase of the public revenue, and the use made of it in reducing the public debt; and in the valuable works and establishments everywhere multiplying over the face of our land.

It is a precious reflection that the transition from this prosperous condition of our

country to the scene which has for some time been distressing us is not chargeable on any unwarrantable view, nor, as I trust, on any involuntary errors, in the public councils. Indulging no passions which trespass on the rights or repose of other nations, it has been the true glory of the United States to cultivate peace by observing justice, and to entitle themselves to the respect of the nations at war by fulfilling their neutral obligation with the most scrupulous impartiality. If there be candor in the world, the truth of these assertions will not be questioned. Posterity at least will do justice to them.

This unexceptionable course could not avail against the injustice and violence of the belligerent powers. In their rage against each other, or impelled by more direct motives, principles of retaliation have been introduced, equally contrary to universal reason and acknowledged law. How long their arbitrary edicts will be continued, in spite of the demonstrations that not even a pretext for them has been given by the

United States, and of the fair and liberal attempts to induce a revocation of them, cannot be anticipated. Assuring myself that, under every vicissitude, the determined spirit and united councils of the nation will be safeguards to its honor and its essential interests, I repair to the post assigned me, with no other discouragement than what springs from my own inadequacy to its high duties. If I do not sink under the weight of this deep conviction, it is because I find some support in a consciousness of the purposes, and a confidence in the principles which I bring with me into this arduous service.

To cherish peace and friendly intercourse with all nations, having correspondent dispositions; to maintain sincere neutrality towards belligerent nations; to prefer in all cases amicable discussions and reasonable accommodation of differences, to a decision of them by an appeal to arms; to exclude foreign intrigues and foreign partialities, so degrading to all countries, and so baneful to free ones; to foster a spirit of independence,

too just to invade the rights of others; too proud to surrender our own; too liberal to indulge unworthy prejudices ourselves, and too elevated not to look down upon them in others; to hold the union of the states as the basis of their peace and happiness; to support the Constitution which is the cement of the Union, as well in its limitations as in its authorities; to respect the rights and authorities reserved to the states and to the people, as equally incorporated with, and essential to the success of the general system, to avoid the slightest interference with the rights of conscience or the functions of religion so wisely exempted from civil jurisdiction; to preserve to their full energy the other salutary provisions in behalf of private and personal rights, and of the freedom of the press; to observe economy in the public expenditures; to liberate the public resources by an honorable discharge of the public debts; to keep within the requisite limits a standing military force, always remembering that an armed and trained militia is the firmest

bulwark of republican governments, that without standing armies their liberty can never be in danger, nor, with large ones, safe; to promote by authorized means improvements friendly to agriculture, and to external, as well as internal commerce; to favor in like manner the advancement of science and the diffusion of information as the best aliment to true liberty; to carry on the benevolent plans which have been so meritoriously applied to the conversion of our aboriginal neighbors from the degradation and wretchedness of savage life to a participation of the improvements of which the human mind and manners are susceptible in a civilized state—as far as sentiments and intentions such as these can aid the fulfilment of my duty, they will be a resource which cannot fail me.

It is my good fortune moreover to have the path in which I am to tread lighted by examples of illustrious services, successfully rendered in the most trying difficulties by those who have marched before me. Of those of my immediate predecessor, it

might least become me here to speak; I may however be pardoned for not suppressing the sympathy with which my heart is full, in the rich reward he enjoys in the benedictions of a beloved country gratefully bestowed for exalted talents, zealously devoted through a long career to the advancement of its highest interest and happiness. But the source to which I look for the aids which alone can supply my deficiencies is in the well-tried intelligence and virtue of my fellow-citizens and in the care of the national interest. In these my confidence will, under every difficulty, be best placed; next to that which we have all been encouraged to feel in the guardianship and guidance of that Almighty Being, whose power regulates the destiny of nations, whose blessings have been so conspicuously dispensed to this rising republic, and to whom we are bound to address our devout gratitude for the past as well as our fervent supplications and best hopes for the future.

## CHRONOLOGY

GEORGE WASHINGTON was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia, February 22, 1732. Attended school until he was sixteen years of age.

1748-51 was engaged in surveying.

1751, appointed Adjutant General of the Virginia troops.

1753, appointed Commander of the Military District of Virginia by Governor Dinwiddie.

In 1759 he married Mrs. Martha Custis and settled as a planter at Mount Vernon.

1774-75 was a delegate to the Virginia House of Burgesses. June 15, 1775, appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Continental forces.

1781, compelled the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

1783, resigned commission as Commander-in-Chief, and returned to Mount Vernon.

1787, President of the Constitutional Convention. January, 1789, elected President of the United States, and was again elected in 1793.

Died at Mount Vernon December 14, 1799.







GEORGE WASHINGTON

## GEORGE WASHINGTON

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SPEECH DELIVERED IN CONGRESS, JUNE 16,  
1775, ON HIS APPOINTMENT AS THE  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

MR. PRESIDENT:

Though I am truly sensible of the high honor done me, in this appointment, yet I feel great distress, from a consciousness that my abilities and military experience may not be equal to the extensive and important trust. However, as the Congress desire it, I will enter upon the momentous duty, and exert every power I possess in their service and for the support of the glorious cause. I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their approbation.

But, lest some unlucky event should happen, unfavorable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered by every gentleman in the room, that I, this day, declare with the utmost sincerity, I do not think

myself equal to the command I am honored with.

As to pay, sir, I beg leave to assure the Congress, that, as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit from it. I will keep an exact account of my expenses. Those, I doubt not, they will discharge, and that is all I desire.

## GEORGE WASHINGTON

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### FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE CONTINENTAL ARMY

The terrible winter at Valley Forge was the lowest point of depression reached during the war for independence. The army during that winter was splendidly drilled by Baron Steuben, and in the spring news came that a treaty had been made with France. Cornwallis surrendered October 19, 1781, and after two more years, a treaty of peace was signed with Great Britain, and Washington, November 2, 1783, issued from Princeton, New Jersey, where Congress was in session, the following farewell address:

The United States in Congress assembled, after giving the most honorable testimony to the merits of the federal armies, and presenting them with the thanks of their country for their long, eminent, and faithful services, having thought proper, by their proclamation bearing date the 18th day of October last, to discharge such part of the troops as were engaged for the war, and to permit the officers on furloughs to retire from service, from and after tomorrow; which proclamation having been communicated in the public papers for the information

and government of all concerned, it only remains for the commander-in-chief to address himself once more, and that for the last time, to the armies of the United States (however widely dispersed the individuals who composed them may be), and to bid them an affectionate, a long farewell.

But before the commander-in-chief takes his final leave of those he holds most dear, he wishes to indulge himself a few moments in calling to mind a slight review of the past. He will then take the liberty of exploring with his military friends their future prospects, of advising the general line of conduct which, in his opinion, ought to be pursued; and he will conclude the address by expressing the obligations he feels himself under for the spirited and able assistance he has experienced from them, in the performance of an arduous office.

A contemplation of the complete attainment (at a period earlier than could have been expected) of the object for which we contended against so formidable a power, *cannot* but inspire us with astonishment

and gratitude. The disadvantageous circumstances on our part, under which the war was undertaken, can never be forgotten. The singular interpositions of Providence in our feeble condition were such as could scarcely escape the attention of the most unobserving; while the unparalleled perseverance of the armies of the United States, through almost every possible suffering and discouragement for the space of eight long years, was little short of a standing miracle.

It is not the meaning nor within the compass of this address to detail the hardships peculiarly incident to our service, or to describe the distresses which in several instances have resulted from the extremes of hunger and nakedness, combined with the rigors of an inclement season; nor is it necessary to dwell on the dark side of our past affairs. Every American officer and soldier must now console himself for any unpleasant circumstances which may have occurred by a recollection of the uncommon scenes of which he has been called

to act no inglorious part, and the astonishing events of which he has been a witness; events which have seldom, if ever before, taken place on the stage of human action nor can they probably ever happen again. For who has before seen a disciplined army formed at once from such raw materials? Who, that was not a witness, could imagine that the most violent local prejudices would cease so soon; and that men, who came from the different parts of the continent, strongly disposed by the habits of education to despise and quarrel with each other, would instantly become but one patriotic band of brothers? Or who, that was not on the spot, can trace the steps by which such a wonderful revolution has been effected, and such a glorious period put to all our warlike toils?


It is universally acknowledged that the enlarged prospects of happiness, opened by the confirmation of our independence and sovereignty, almost exceed the power of description. And shall not the brave men, who have contributed so essentially to these



inestimable acquisitions, retiring victorious from the field of war to the field of agriculture, participate in all the blessings which have been obtained? In such a republic, who will exclude them from the rights of citizens and the fruits of their labor? In such a country, so happily circumstanced, the pursuits of commerce and the cultivation of the soil will unfold to industry the certain road to competence. To those hardy soldiers, who are actuated by the spirit of adventure, the fisheries will afford ample and profitable employment; and the extensive and fertile regions of the West will yield a most happy asylum to those who, fond of domestic enjoyment, are seeking for personal independence. Nor is it possible to conceive that any one of the United States will prefer a national bankruptcy, and a dissolution of the Union, to a compliance with the requisitions of Congress, and the payment of its just debts; so that the officers and soldiers may expect considerable assistance, in recommencing their civil occupations, from the sums due

to them from the public, which must and will most inevitably be paid.


In order to effect this desirable purpose, and to remove the prejudices which may have taken possession of the minds of any of the good people of the states, it is earnestly recommended to all the troops that, with strong attachments to the Union, they should carry with them into civil society the most conciliating dispositions, and that they should prove themselves not less virtuous and useful as citizens than they have been persevering and victorious as soldiers. What though there should be some envious individuals, who are unwilling to pay the debt the public has contracted, or to yield the tribute due to merit; yet let such unworthy treatment produce no invectives, nor any instance of intemperate conduct. Let it be remembered that the unbiased voice of the free citizens of the United States has promised the just reward and given the merited applause. Let it be known and remembered that the reputation of the federal armies is established



beyond the reach of malevolence; and let a consciousness of their achievements and fame still incite the men who composed them to honorable actions; under the persuasion that the private virtues of economy, prudence and industry will not be less amiable in civil life than the more splendid qualities of valor, perseverance and enterprise were in the field. Everyone may rest assured that much, very much of the future happiness of the officers and men will depend upon the wise and manly conduct which shall be adopted by them when they are mingled with the great body of the community. And although the general has so frequently given it as his opinion in the most public and explicit manner that, unless the principles of the federal government were properly supported, and the powers of the Union increased, the honor, dignity and justice of the nation would be lost forever; yet he cannot help repeating on this occasion so interesting a sentiment, and leaving it as his last injunction to every officer and every soldier,

who may view the subject in the same serious point of light, to add his best endeavors to those of his worthy fellow-citizens toward effecting these great and valuable purposes, on which our very existence as a nation so materially depends.

The commander-in-chief conceives little is now wanting to enable the soliders to change the military character into that of the citizen but that steady and decent tenor of behavior which has generally distinguished, not only the army under his immediate command, but the different detachments and separate armies through the course of the war. From their good sense and prudence he anticipates the happiest consequences, and while he congratulates them on the glorious occasion which renders their services in the field no longer necessary, he wishes to express the strong obligations he feels himself under for the assistance he has received from every class and in every instance. He presents his thanks in the most serious and affectionate manner to the general officers, as



well for their counsel on many interesting occasions as for their ardor in promoting the success of the plans he had adopted; to the commandants of regiments and corps, and to the other officers, for their great zeal and attention in carrying his orders promptly into execution; to the staff, for their alacrity and exactness in performing the duties of their several departments; and to the non-commissioned officers and private soldiers, for their extraordinary patience and suffering, as well as their invincible fortitude in action. To the various branches of the army the General takes this last and solemn opportunity of professing his inviolable attachment and friendship. He wishes more than bare professions were in his power; that he were really able to be useful to them all in future life. He flatters himself, however, they will do him the justice to believe that whatever could with propriety be attempted by him has been done.

And being now to conclude these his last public orders, to take his ultimate leave

in a short time of the military character, and to bid a final adieu to the armies he has so long had the honor to command, he can only again offer in their behalf his recommendations to their grateful country, and his prayers to the God of armies. May ample justice be done them here, and may the choicest of Heaven's favors, both here and hereafter, attend those who, under the Divine auspices, have secured innumerable blessings for others. With these wishes and his benediction, the commander-in-chief is about to retire from service. The curtain of separation will soon be drawn, and the military scene to him will be closed forever.

## GEORGE WASHINGTON

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FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS DELIVERED IN  
NEW YORK CITY, APRIL 30, 1789

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE SENATE, AND OF  
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

Among the vicissitudes incident to life, no event could have filled me with greater anxieties than that of which the notification was transmitted by your order, and received on the fourteenth day of the present month. On the one hand, I was summoned by my country, whose voice I can never hear but with veneration and love, from a retreat which I had chosen with the fondest predilection, and in my flattering hopes with an immutable decision as the asylum of my declining years; a retreat which was rendered every day more necessary, as well as more dear to me, by the addition of habit to inclination, and of frequent interruptions in my health to the gradual waste committed on it by time. On the other

hand, the magnitude and difficulty of the trust, to which the voice of my country called me, being sufficient to waken in the wisest and most experienced of her citizens a distrustful scrutiny into his own qualifications, could not but overwhelm with despondence one, who, inheriting inferior endowments from nature, and unpracticed in the duties of civil administration, ought to be peculiarly conscious of his own deficiencies. In this conflict of emotions, all I dare aver is that it has been my faithful study to collect my duty from a just appreciation of every circumstance by which it might be affected. All I dare hope is that if in executing this task, I have been too much swayed by a grateful remembrance of former instances, or by an affectionate sensibility to this transcendent proof of the confidence of my fellow-citizens, and have thence too little consulted my incapacity as well as disinclination for the weighty and untried cares before me, my error will be palliated by the motives which misled me, and its consequences be judged by my



country with some share of the partiality in which they originated.

Such being the impression under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station, it would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe—who presides in the councils of nations—and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States, a government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes; and may enable every instrument, employed in its administration, to execute with success the functions allotted to his charge. In tendering this homage to the great Author of every public and private good, I assure myself that it expresses your sentiments not less than my own, nor those of my fellow-citizens at large less than either. No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of

men, more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency; and in the important revolution just accomplished in the system of their united government, the tranquil deliberations and voluntary consent of so many distinct communities, from which the event has resulted, cannot be compared with the means by which most governments have been established, without some return of pious gratitude, along with an humble anticipation of the future blessings which the past seems to presage. These reflections, arising out of the present crisis, have forced themselves too strongly on my mind to be suppressed. You will join with me, I trust, in thinking that there are none under the influence of which the proceedings of a new and free government can more auspiciously commence.

By the article establishing the executive department, it is made the duty of the

President "to recommend to your consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient." The circumstances under which I now meet you will acquit me from entering into that subject, further than to refer to the great constitutional charter under which you are assembled, and which, in defining your powers, designates the objects to which your attention is to be given. It will be more consistent with those circumstances, and far more congenial with the feelings which actuate me, to substitute in place of a recommendation of particular measures the tribute that is due to the talents, the rectitude, and the patriotism which adorn the characters selected to devise and adopt them. In these honorable qualifications, I behold the surest pledges, that as, on one side, no local prejudices or attachments, no separate views, nor party animosities, will misdirect the comprehensive and equal eye which ought to watch over this great assemblage of communities and interests; so on another, that the foundations of our national

policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality; and the pre-eminence of free government be exemplified by all the attributes which can win the affections of its citizens, and command the respect of the world. I dwell on this prospect with every satisfaction which an ardent love for my country can inspire; since there is no truth more thoroughly established than that there exists in the economy and course of nature an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage, between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity; since we ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained; and since the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally, staked on the experiment

intrusted to the hands of the American people.

Besides the ordinary objects submitted to your care, it will remain with your judgment to decide how far an exercise of the occasional power delegated by the Fifth Article of the Constitution is rendered expedient at the present juncture by the nature of objections which have been urged against the system, or by the degree of inquietude which has given birth to them. Instead of undertaking particular recommendations on this subject, in which I could be guided by no lights derived from official opportunities, I shall again give way to my entire confidence in your discernment and pursuit of the public good; for I assure myself that whilst you carefully avoid every alteration which might endanger the benefits of an united and effective government, or which ought to await the future lessons of experience, a reverence for the characteristic rights of freemen and a regard for the public harmony will sufficiently influence your deliberations on the question how far

the former may be more impregnably fortified, or the latter be safely and advantageously promoted.

To the preceding observations I have one to add, which will be most properly addressed to the House of Representatives. It concerns myself, and will therefore be as brief as possible. When I was first honored with a call into the service of my country, then on the eve of an arduous struggle for its liberties, the light in which I contemplated my duty required that I should renounce every pecuniary compensation. From this resolution I have in no instance departed. And being still under the impressions which produced it I must decline, as inapplicable to myself, any share in the personal emoluments which may be indispensably included in a permanent provision for the executive department; and must accordingly pray that the pecuniary estimates for the station in which I am placed may, during my continuance in it, be limited to such actual expenditures as the public good may be thought to require.

Having thus imparted to you my sentiments, as they have been awakened by the occasion which brings us together, I shall take my present leave; but not without resorting once more to the benign Parent of the human race, in humble supplication, that since He has been pleased to favor the American people with opportunities for deliberating in perfect tranquility, and dispositions for deciding with unparalleled unanimity on a form of government for the security of their union and the advancement of their happiness; so His divine blessings may be equally conspicuous in the enlarged views, the temperate consultations, and the wise measures on which the success of this government must depend.

## GEORGE WASHINGTON

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SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS, DELIVERED  
IN PHILADELPHIA MARCH 4, 1793

FELLOW-CITIZENS:

I am again called upon by the voice of my country to execute the functions of its Chief Magistrate. When the occasion proper for it shall arrive, I shall endeavor to express the high sense I entertain of this distinguished honor, and of the confidence which has been reposed in me by the people of the United States of America. Previous to the execution of any official act of the President, the Constitution requires an oath of office. This oath I am now about to take and in your presence; that if it shall be found, during my administration of the government, I have, in any instance, violated, willingly or knowingly, the injunction thereof, I may (besides incurring constitutional punishment) be subject to the upbraidings of all who are now witnesses of the present solemn ceremony.



# GEORGE WASHINGTON

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## FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

Washington was chosen first President of the United States, and at the end of his term he was again chosen. When his second term drew near its close, he refused to be a candidate for re-election, and six months before he was to leave the President's chair he issued the following farewell address, September 17, 1796.

### FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:

The period for a new election of a citizen, to administer the executive government of the United States, being not far distant, and the time actually arrived when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those out of whom a choice is to be made.

I beg you, at the same time, to do me the justice to be assured that this resolution has not been taken without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation which binds a dutiful citizen to his country; and that, in withdrawing the tender of service, which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest; no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness; but am supported by a full conviction that the step is compatible with both.

The acceptance of, and continuance hitherto in, the office to which your suffrages have twice called me, have been a uniform sacrifice of inclination to the opinion of duty, and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire. I constantly hoped that it would have been much earlier in my power, consistently with motives which I was not at liberty to disregard, to return to that retirement from which I had been reluctantly drawn. The strength of my inclination to do this, previous to the

last election, had even led to the preparation of an address to declare it to you; but mature reflection on the then perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign nations, and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence, impelled me to abandon the idea.

I rejoice that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the sentiment of duty or propriety; and am persuaded, whatever partiality may be retained for my services, that, in the present circumstances of our country, you will not disapprove my determination to retire.

The impressions with which I first undertook the arduous trust were explained on the proper occasion. In the discharge of this trust I will only say that I have with good intentions contributed toward the organization and administration of the government the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable. Not unconscious in the outset of the inferiority


of my qualifications, experience in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself; and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome. Satisfied that, if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe that, while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In looking forward to the moment which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country for the many honors it has conferred upon me; still more for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me; and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable attachment by services faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal. If

benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise, and as an instructive example in our annals, that under circumstances in which the passions, agitated in every direction, were liable to mislead, amidst appearances sometimes dubious, vicissitudes of fortune often discouraging, in situations in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism, the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts, and a guaranty of the plans by which they were effected. Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me to my grave, as a strong incitement to unceasing vows that Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence; that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual; that the free constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained; that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue; that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these states, under the auspices of liberty,

may be made complete, by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing, as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and adoption of every nation which is yet a stranger to it.

Here, perhaps, I ought to stop. But a solicitude for your welfare, which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger natural to that solicitude, urge me, on an occasion like the present, to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments, which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all-important to the permanency of your felicity as a people. These will be offered to you with the more freedom, as you can only see in them the disinterested warnings of a parting friend, who can possibly have no personal motive to bias his counsel. Nor can I forget, as an encouragement to it, your indulgent reception of my sentiments on a former and not dissimilar occasion.



Interwoven as is the love of liberty with every ligament of your hearts, no recommendation of mine is necessary to fortify or confirm the attachment.

The unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence; the support of your tranquility at home; your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize. But, as it is easy to foresee, that from different causes, and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed; it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and

triumphed together; the independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint counsels, and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings, and successes.

But these considerations, however powerfully they address themselves to your sensibility, are greatly outweighed by those which apply more immediately to your interest. Here, every portion of our country finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving the union of the whole.

The North, in an unrestrained intercourse with the South, protected by the equal laws of a common government, finds in the productions of the latter great additional resources of maritime and commercial enterprise and precious materials of manufacturing industry. The South in the same intercourse, benefiting by the agency of the North, sees its agriculture grow and its commerce expand. Turning partly into its own channels the seamen of the North, it finds its particular navigation invigorated; and, while it contributes in different ways



to nourish and increase the general mass of the national navigation, it looks forward to the protection of a maritime strength, to which itself is unequally adapted. The East, in a like intercourse with the West, already finds, and in the progressive improvement of interior communications by land and water will more and more find, a valuable vent for the commodities which it brings from abroad, or manufactures at home. The West derives from the East supplies requisite to its growth and comfort and, what is perhaps of still greater consequence, it must of necessity owe the secure enjoyment of indispensable outlets for its own productions to the weight, influence, and the future maritime strength of the Atlantic side of the Union, directed by an indissoluble community of interest as one nation. Any other tenure by which the West can hold this essential advantage, whether derived from its own separate strength or from an apostate and unnatural connection with any foreign power, must be intrinsically precarious.

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While then every part of our country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in union, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in the united mass of means and efforts, greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations; and, what is of inestimable value, they must derive from union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves, which so frequently afflict neighboring countries not tied together by the same government; which their own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter. Hence, likewise, they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments, which under any form of government are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty. In this sense it is, that your union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one

ought to endear to you the preservation of the other.

These considerations speak a persuasive language to every reflecting and virtuous mind, and exhibit the continuance of the Union as a primary object of patriotic desire. Is there a doubt whether a common government can embrace so large a sphere? Let experience solve it. To listen to mere speculation in such a case were criminal. We are authorized to hope that a proper organization of the whole, with the auxiliary agency of governments for the respective subdivisions, will afford a happy issue to the experiment. It is well worth a fair and full experiment. With such powerful and obvious motives to union, affecting all parts of our country, while experience shall not have demonstrated its impracticability, there will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those who in any quarter may endeavor to weaken its bands.

In contemplating the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as a matter of serious concern, that any ground should

have been furnished for characterizing parties by geographical discriminations Northern and Southern, Atlantic and Western; whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence, within particular districts, is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heart-burnings which spring from these misrepresentations; they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection. The inhabitants of our western country have lately had a useful lesson on this head; they have seen, in the negotiation by the executive, and in the unanimous ratification by the Senate, of the treaty with Spain, and in the universal satisfaction at that event throughout the United States, a decisive proof how unfounded were the suspicions propagated among them of a policy in the general government and in the Atlantic states

unfriendly to their interests in regard to the Mississippi; they have been witnesses to the formation of two treaties, that with Great Britain and that with Spain, which secure to them everything they could desire, in respect to our foreign relations, toward confirming their prosperity. Will it not be their wisdom to rely for the preservation of these advantages on the Union by which they were procured? Will they not henceforth be deaf to those advisers, if such there are, who would sever them from their brethren and connect them with aliens?

To the efficacy and permanency of your union, a government for the whole is indispensable. No alliances, however strict, between the parts can be an adequate substitute; they must inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions which all alliances in all times have experienced. Sensible of this momentous truth, you have improved upon your first essay, by the adoption of a constitution of government better calculated than your former for an intimate union, and for the efficacious

management of your common concerns. This government, the offspring of our own choice, uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its powers, uniting security with energy, and containing within itself a provision for its own amendment, has a just claim to your confidence and your support. Respect for its authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true liberty. The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government. But the constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.

All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations,

under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community; and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of fashion, rather than the organs of consistent and wholesome plans digested by common councils, and modified by mutual interests.

However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely, in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people, and to usurp

for themselves the reins of government; destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion.

Toward the preservation of your government, and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite, not only that you steadily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the prettexts. One method of assault may be to effect, in the forms of the Constitution, alterations, which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown. In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of governments as of other human institutions; that experience is the surest standard by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country; that facility in changes, upon the credit of mere hypothesis and opinion, exposes to perpetual change, from the endless variety



continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

It serves always to distract the public councils, and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another, foment occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the doors to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another.

There is an opinion that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the administration of the government, and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This, within certain limits, is probably true; and, in governments of a monarchical cast, patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with favor, upon the spirit of party. But

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in those of the popular character, in governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose. And there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it. A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent it bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume.

It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution, in those intrusted with its administration, to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of

the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern, some of them in our country and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for, though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance in permanent evil any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield.

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would

that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation *desert* the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice?

And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule, indeed, extends with more or less force to every species

of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?

Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.


As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit. One method of preserving it is, to use it as sparingly as possible; avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace, but remembering also that timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it; avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertion in time of peace to discharge the debts, which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear. The execution

of these maxims belongs to your representatives, but it is necessary that public opinion should co-operate. To facilitate to them the performance of their duty it is essential that you should practically bear in mind that toward the payment of debts there must be revenue; that to have revenue there must be taxes; that no taxes can be devised which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant; that the intrinsic embarrassment, inseparable from the selection of the proper objects (which is always a choice of difficulties), ought to be a decisive motive for a candid construction of the conduct of the government in making it, and for a spirit of acquiescence in the measures for obtaining revenue which the public exigencies may at any time dictate.

Observe good faith and justice toward all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and, at no distant period, a great nation, to give to

mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt but, in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it; can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings toward all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges toward another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its



interest. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. Hence, frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests. The nation, prompted by ill-will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject; at other times, it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty, of nations has been the victim.

So likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real



common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions, by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained, and by exciting jealousy, ill-will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld. And it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favorite nation), facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity; gilding with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways such attachments are particu-

larly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practise the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils! Such an attachment of a small or weak, toward a great and powerful nation, dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens), the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy, to be useful, must be impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defence against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation, and excessive dislike of another, cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots who may resist the intrigues of the

favorite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the purpose, to surrender their interests.

The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off when

we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality, we may at any time resolve upon, to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world; so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it; for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the

best policy. I repeat it, therefore, let the engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But, in my opinion, it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.

Taking care always to keep ourselves suitable establishments, on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations, are recommended by policy, equity, and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal impartial hand; neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences; supporting the natural course of things; directing and diversifying by gentle means the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing; establishing with powers so disposed a good order to give trade a stable course, to defend the rights of our merchants, and to enable the government to support them, consistent with the rules of intercourse, the best of the present circumstances and mutual opinion will permit, but temporary, and liable to

from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate; constantly keeping in view, that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another; that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character; that, by such acceptance, it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion, which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

In offering to you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish; that they will control the usual current of the passions, or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations. But, if I may even flatter myself that they may be productive

of some partial benefit, some occasional good; that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism; this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.

How far in the discharge of my official duties I have been guided by the principles which have been delineated, the public records and other evidences of my conduct must witness to you and to the world. To myself, the assurance of my own conscience is, that I have at least believed myself to be guided by them.

In relation to the still subsisting war in Europe, my proclamation of the 22d of April, 1793, is the index of my plan. Sanctioned by your approving voice, and by that of your Representatives in both Houses of Congress, the spirit of that measure has continually governed me, uninfluenced by any attempts to deter or divert me from it.

After deliberate examination, with the

aid of the best lights I could obtain, I was well satisfied that our country, under all the circumstances of the case, had a right to take, and was bound in duty and interest to take, a neutral position. Having taken it, I determined, as far as should depend upon me, to maintain it, with moderation, perseverance and firmness.

The considerations which respect the right to hold this conduct, it is not necessary on this occasion to detail. I will only observe, that, according to my understanding of the matter, that right, so far from being denied by any of the belligerent powers, has been virtually admitted by all.

The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be inferred, without anything more, from the obligation which justice and humanity impose on every nation, in cases in which it is free to act, to maintain inviolate the relations of peace and amity toward other nations.


The inducements of interest for observing that conduct will best be referred to your own reflections and experience. With me a predominant motive has been to endeavor



to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions, and to progress without interruption to that degree of strength and consistency which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes.

Though, in reviewing the incidents of my administration, I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence; and that, after forty-five years of my life dedicated to its service with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

Relying on its kindness in this as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love toward it, which is so natural to a man who



views in it the native soil of himself and his progenitors for several generations, I anticipate with pleasing expectation that retreat, in which I promise myself to realize, without alloy, the sweet enjoyment of partaking, in the midst of my fellow-citizens, the benign influence of good laws under a free government, the ever favorite object of my heart, and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labors, and dangers.

## CHRONOLOGY

**MAJOR-GENERAL HENRY LEE** was born at Leesylvania, Westmoreland County, Virginia, January 29, 1756.

Was graduated from Princeton College in 1774. Commanded "Lee's legion" in the Revolution.

In 1777 joined Washington just previous to the battle of Brandywine, and for three years was on outpost and scout duty.

In 1780 was sent to the South to aid in the operations there.

In 1782 resigned his command on account of ill-health, and returned to Virginia.

In 1786 was elected a delegate to Congress. 1788, represented Westmoreland County in the Virginia Ratifying Convention.

1789-91, member of the State Legislature. 1792-95, Governor of Virginia. 1794, commanded the troops which quelled the "Whiskey Insurrection."

1799-1801, entered Congress. 1801, retired to private life.

In 1812 was appointed Major-General in the war with Great Britain, but was injured before entering upon his new duties, and was unable to take the command.

Died at Cumberland Island, Ga., March 25, 1818.

## HENRY LEE

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FUNERAL ORATION ON WASHINGTON, DELIVERED BEFORE BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS DECEMBER 26, 1799

In obedience to your will, I rise, your humble organ, with the hope of executing a part of the system of public mourning which you have been pleased to adopt, commemorative of the death of the most illustrious and most beloved personage this country has ever produced; and which, while it transmits to posterity your sense of the awful event, faintly represents your knowledge of the consummate excellence you so cordially honor.

Desperate, indeed, is any attempt on earth to meet correspondently this dispensation of Heaven; for, while with pious resignation we submit to the will of an all-gracious Providence, we can never cease lamenting, in our finite view of Omnipotent Wisdom, the heartrending privation for

which our nation weeps. When the civilized world shakes to its centre; when every moment gives birth to strange and momentous changes; when our peaceful quarter of the globe, exempt as it happily has been from any share in the slaughter of the human race, may yet be compelled to abandon her pacific policy, and to risk the doleful casualties of war; what limit is there to the extent of our loss? None within the reach of my words to express; none which your feelings will not disavow.

The founder of our federate republic—our bulwark in war, our guide in peace, is no more! O that this were but questionable! Hope, the comforter of the wretched, would pour into our agonizing hearts its balmy dew. But, alas! there is no hope for us; our Washington is removed forever! Possessing the stoutest frame and purest mind, he had passed nearly to his sixty-eighth year, in the enjoyment of high health, when, habituated by his care of us to neglect himself, a slight cold, disregarded, became inconvenient on Friday, oppressive

on Saturday, and, defying every medical interposition, before the morning of Sunday put an end to the best of men. An end, did I say? His fame survives, bounded only by the limits of the earth, and by the extent of the human mind. He survives in our hearts—in the growing knowledge of our children—in the affection of the good throughout the world. And when our monuments shall be done away; when nations now existing shall be no more; when even our young and far-spreading empire shall have perished; still will our Washington's glory unfaded shine, and die not, until love of virtue cease on earth, or earth itself sinks into chaos!

How, my fellow-citizens, shall I single to your grateful hearts his pre-eminent worth? Where shall I begin, in opening to your view a character throughout sublime? Shall I speak of his warlike achievements, all springing from obedience to his country's will, all directed to his country's good?

Will you go with me to the banks of the Monongahela, to see your youthful Wash-

ington supporting, in the dismal hour of Indian victory, the ill-fated Braddock, and saving, by his judgment and by his valor, the remains of a defeated army, pressed by the conquering savage foe? Or when, oppressed America nobly resolving to risk her all in defence of her violated rights, he was elevated by the unanimous voice of Congress to the command of her armies? Will you follow him to the high grounds of Boston, where, to an undisciplined, courageous and virtuous yeomanry, his presence gave the stability of system, and infused the invincibility of love of country? Or shall I carry you to the painful scenes of Long Island, York Island and New Jersey, when, combating superior and gallant armies aided by powerful fleets, and led by chiefs high in the roll of fame, he stood the bulwark of our safety, undismayed by disaster, unchanged by change of fortune? Or will you view him in the precarious fields of Trenton, where deep gloom, unnerving every arm, reigned triumphant through our thinned, worn-down, unaided ranks—

himself unmoved? Dreadful was the night. It was about this time of winter. The storm raged. The Delaware, rolling furiously with floating ice, forbade the approach of man. Washington, self-collected, viewed the tremendous scene. His country called. Unappalled by surrounding dangers, he passed to the hostile shore; he fought; he conquered. The morning sun cheered the American world. Our country rose on the event; and her dauntless chief, pursuing his blow, completed in the lawns of Princeton what his vast soul had conceived on the shores of Delaware.

Thence to the strong grounds of Morristown he led his small but gallant band; and through an eventful winter, by the high efforts of his genius, whose matchless force was measurable only by the growth of difficulties, he held in check formidable hostile legions, conducted by a chief experienced in the art of war, and famed for his valor on the ever-memorable Heights of Abraham, where fell Wolfe, Montcalm, and since, our much lamented



Montgomery; all covered with glory. In this fortunate interval, produced by his masterly conduct, our fathers, ourselves, animated by his resistless example, rallied around our country's standard, and continued to follow her beloved chief through the various and trying scenes to which the destinies of our Union led.

Who is there that has forgotten the vales of Brandywine, the fields of Germantown, or the plains of Monmouth? Everywhere present, wants of every kind obstructing, numerous and valiant armies encountering, himself a host, he assuaged our sufferings, limited our privations, and upheld our tottering republic. Shall I display to you the spread of the fire of his soul, by rehearsing the praises of the hero of Saratoga, and his much loved compeer of the Carolinas? No: our Washington wears not borrowed glory. To Gates, to Greene, he gave without reserve the applause due to their eminent merit; and long may the chiefs of Saratoga and of Eutaws receive the grateful respect of a grateful people.

Moving in his own orbit, he imparted heat and light to his most distant satellites; and combining the physical and moral force of all within his sphere, with irresistible weight he took his course, commiserating folly, disdaining vice, dismaying treason, and invigorating despondency; until the auspicious hour arrived, when, united with the intrepid forces of a potent and magnanimous ally, he brought to submission the since conqueror of India; thus finishing his long career of military glory with a lustre corresponding to his great name, and in this his last act of war affixing the seal of fate to our nation's birth.

To the horrid din of battle sweet peace succeeded; and our virtuous chief, mindful only of the common good, in a moment tempting personal aggrandizement, hushed the discontents of growing sedition, and, surrendering his power into the hands from which he had received it, converted his sword into a ploughshare; teaching an admiring world, that to be truly great you must be truly good.

Were I to stop here, the picture would be incomplete, and the task imposed unfinished. Great as was our Washington in war, and as much as did that greatness contribute to produce the American republic, it is not in war alone his pre-eminence stands conspicuous. His various talents, combining all the capacities of a statesman with those of a soldier, fitted him alike to guide the councils and the armies of our nation. Scarcely had he rested from his martial toils, while his invaluable parental advice was still sounding in our ears, when he, who had been our shield and our sword, was called forth to act a less splendid, but more important part.

Possessing a clear and penetrating mind, a strong and sound judgment, calmness and temper for deliberation, with invincible firmness and perseverance in resolutions maturely formed; drawing information from all; acting from himself, with incorruptible integrity and unvarying patriotism; his own superiority and the public confidence alike marked him as the man designed by

Heaven to lead in the great political as well as military events which have distinguished the era of his life.

The finger of an overruling Providence, pointing at Washington, was neither mistaken nor unobserved, when, to realize the vast hopes to which our revolution had given birth, a change of political system became indispensable.

How novel, how grand the spectacle! Independent states stretched over an immense territory, and known only by common difficulty, clinging to their union as the rock of their safety; deciding, by frank comparison of their relative condition, to rear on that rock, under the guidance of reason, a common government, through whose commanding protection, liberty and order, with their long train of blessings, should be safe to themselves, and the sure inheritance of their posterity.

This arduous task devolved on citizens selected by the people, from knowledge of their wisdom and confidence in their virtue. In this august assembly of sages and of

patriots, Washington of course was found; and, as if acknowledged to be most wise where all were wise, with one voice he was declared their chief. How well he merited this rare distinction, how faithful were the labors of himself and his compatriots, the work of their hands, and our union, strength and prosperity, the fruits of that work, best attest.

But to have essentially aided in presenting to his country this consummation of her hopes, neither satisfied the claims of his fellow-citizens on his talents, nor those duties which the possession of those talents imposed. Heaven had not infused into his mind such an uncommon share of its ethereal spirit to remain unemployed, nor bestowed on him his genius unaccompanied with the corresponding duty of devoting it to the common good. To have framed a Constitution, was showing only, without realizing, the general happiness. This great work remained to be done; and America, steadfast in her preference, with one voice summoned her beloved Washington, unprac-

tised as he was in the duties of civil administration, to execute this last act in the completion of the national felicity. Obedient to her call, he assumed the high office with that self-distrust peculiar to his innate modesty, the constant attendant of pre-eminent virtue. What was the burst of joy through our anxious land on this exhilarating event, is known to us all. The aged, the young, the brave, the fair, rivalled each other in demonstrations of their gratitude; and this high-wrought, delightful scene was heightened in its effect, by the singular contest between the zeal of the bestowers and the avoidance of the receiver of the honors bestowed.

Commencing his administration, what heart is not charmed with the recollection of the pure and wise principles announced by himself, as the basis of his political life? He best understood the indissoluble union between virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage, between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy, and the solid rewards of public

prosperity and individual felicity. Watching with an equal and comprehensive eye over this great assemblage of communities and interests, he laid the foundations of our national policy in the unerring, immutable principles of morality, based on religion, exemplifying the pre-eminence of a free government by all the attributes which win the affections of its citizens, or command the respect of the world.

*"O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint!"*

Leading through the complicated difficulties produced by previous obligations and conflicting interests, seconded by succeeding Houses of Congress, enlightened and patriotic, he surmounted all original obstruction, and brightened the path of our national felicity.

The presidential term expiring, his solicitude to exchange exaltation for humility returned with a force increased with increase of age; and he had prepared his farewell address to his countrymen, proclaiming his intention, when the united

interposition of all around him, enforced by the eventful prospects of the epoch, produced a further sacrifice of inclination to duty. The election of President followed; and Washington, by the unanimous vote of the nation, was called to resume the chief magistracy. What a wonderful fixture of confidence! Which attracts most our admiration, a people so correct, or a citizen combining an assemblage of talents forbidding rivalry, and stifling even envy itself? Such a nation ought to be happy; such a chief must be forever revered.

War, long menaced by the Indian tribes, now broke out; and the terrible conflict, deluging Europe with blood, began to shed its baneful influence over our happy land. To the first, outstretching his invincible arm, under the orders of the gallant Wayne, the American eagle soared triumphant through distant forests. Peace followed victory; and the melioration of the condition of the enemy followed peace. God-like virtue! which uplifts even the subdued savage.



To the second he opposed himself. New and delicate was the conjuncture, and great was the stake. Soon did his penetrating mind discern and seize the only course, continuing to us all the felicity enjoyed. He issued his proclamation of neutrality. This index to his whole subsequent conduct was sanctioned by the approbation of both Houses of Congress, and by the approving voice of the people.

To this sublime policy he inviolably adhered, unmoved by foreign intrusion, unshaken by domestic turbulence.

*"Justum et tenacem propositi virum,  
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,  
Non vultus instantis tyranni,  
Mente quatit solida."*

Maintaining his pacific system at the expense of no duty, America, faithful to herself, and unstained in her honor, continued to enjoy the delights of peace, while afflicted Europe mourns in every quarter under the accumulated miseries of an unexampled war; miseries in which our happy country must have shared, had not our

pre-eminent Washington been as firm in council as he was brave in the field.

Pursuing steadfastly his course, he held safe the public happiness, preventing foreign war, and quelling internal discord, till the revolving period of a third election approached, when he executed his interrupted, but inextinguishable desire of returning to the humble walks of private life.

The promulgation of his fixed resolution stopped the anxious wishes of an affectionate people from adding a third unanimous testimonial of their unabated confidence in the man so long enthroned in their hearts. When before was affection like this exhibited on earth? Turn over the records of ancient Greece; review the annals of mighty Rome; examine the volumes of modern Europe—you search in vain. America and her Washington only afford the dignified exemplification.

The illustrious personage called by the national voice in succession to the arduous office of guiding a free people, had new difficulties to encounter. The amicable

effort of settling our difficulties with France, begun by Washington, and pursued by his successor in virtue as in station, proving abortive, America took measures of self-defence. No sooner was the public mind roused by a prospect of danger, than every eye was turned to the friend of all, though secluded from public view, and gray in public service. The virtuous veteran, following his plough, received the unexpected summons with mingled emotions of indignation at the unmerited ill treatment of his country, and of a determination once more to risk his all in her defence. The annunciation of these feelings in his affecting letter to the President, accepting the command of the army, concludes his official conduct.

First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen, he was second to none in the humble and endearing scenes of private life. Pious, just, humane, temperate and sincere; uniform, dignified and commanding, his example was as edifying to all around him, as were the effects of that example lasting.

To his equals he was condescending, to his inferiors kind, and to the dear object of his affections exemplarily tender. Correct throughout, vice shuddered in his presence, and virtue always felt his fostering hand. The purity of his private character gave effulgence to his public virtues.

His last scene comported with the whole tenor of his life. Although in extreme pain, not a sigh, not a groan escaped him; and with undisturbed serenity he closed his well-spent life. Such was the man America has lost! Such was the man for whom our nation mourns!

Methinks I see his august image, and hear, falling from his venerable lips, these deep-sinking words:

“Cease, Sons of America, lamenting our separation. Go on, and confirm by your wisdom the fruits of our joint councils, joint efforts, and common dangers. Reverence religion; diffuse knowledge throughout your land; patronize the arts and sciences; let liberty and order be inseparable companions; control party spirit, the bane

of free government; observe good faith to, and cultivate peace with all nations; shut up every avenue to foreign influence; contract rather than extend national connexion; rely on yourselves only: be American in thought and deed. Thus will you give immortality to that union, which was the constant object of my terrestrial labors; thus will you preserve undisturbed to the latest posterity the felicity of a people to me most dear; and thus will you supply (if my happiness is now aught to you) the only vacancy in the round of pure bliss high Heaven bestows."



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## CHRONOLOGY

JOHN CALDWELL CALHOUN was born in the Abbeville District, North Carolina, March 18, 1782. Was of Irish extraction.

Was graduated at Yale College in 1804. Studied law at Litchfield (Conn.) Law School, and was admitted to the Bar in 1807. In the same year began his practice at Abbeville.

1808-09 member of the State General Assembly of North Carolina. 1811-17 member of Congress from North Carolina.

Was Secretary of War in President Monroe's Cabinet. 1825-32, Vice-President of the United States.

1832-43, United States Senator from North Carolina.

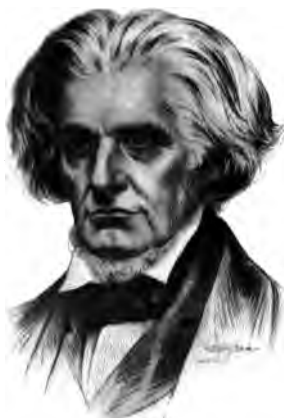
1844-45, Secretary of State under President Tyler.

1845-50, United States Senator from North Carolina.

Died at Washington March 31, 1850.







JOHN C. CALHOUN

## JOHN C. CALHOUN

### ON THE SECOND RESOLUTION REPORTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DECEMBER 12, 1811

The Committee on Foreign Relations, on the 29th of November, 1811, submitted a report, which, after an able examination of the causes of war with Great Britain, concluded by recommending to the house the adoption of a series of resolutions, among which was the following:

"2. *Resolved*, That an additional force of ten thousand regular troops ought to be immediately raised to serve for three years; and that a bounty in lands ought to be given to encourage enlistments."

This resolution having been amended in committee of the whole, by striking out the word "*ten*," was reported to the House, where an animated debate ensued. A majority of the committee avowed their object to be a preparation for war; and the discussion took the widest range, embracing almost every topic of foreign and domestic policy. The principal speaker, on the part of the opposition, was Mr. Randolph of Virginia, to whose remarks Mr. Calhoun seems to have confined his reply. The resolution was finally adopted—Yeas, 109; Nays, 22.

MR. SPEAKER:—I understood the opinion of the Committee on Foreign Relations differently from what the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Randolph) has stated to be his impression. I certainly understood that

the committee recommended the measures now before the House, as a preparation for war; and such, in fact, was its express resolve, agreed to, I believe, by every member, except that gentleman. I do not attribute any wilful misstatement to him, but consider it the effect of inadvertency or mistake. Indeed, the Report could mean nothing but war or empty menace. I hope no member of this House is in favor of the latter. A bullying, menacing system has everything to condemn and nothing to recommend it. In expense, it almost rivals war. It excites contempt abroad, and destroys confidence at home. Menaces are serious things; and ought to be resorted to with as much caution and seriousness as war itself; and should, if not successful, be invariably followed by it. It was not the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. Grundy) who made this a war question. The resolve contemplates an additional regular force; a measure confessedly improper but as a preparation for war, but undoubtedly necessary in that event.

Sir, I am not insensible to the weighty importance of the proposition, for the first time submitted to this House, to compel a redress of our long list of complaints against one of the belligerents. According to my mode of thinking, the more serious the question, the stronger and more unalterable ought to be our convictions before we give it our support. War, in our country, ought never to be resorted to but when it is clearly justifiable and necessary; so much so as not to require the aid of logic to convince our understandings, nor the ardor of eloquence to inflame our passions. There are many reasons why this country should never resort to war but for causes the most urgent and necessary. It is sufficient that, under a government like ours, none but such will justify it in the eyes of the people; and were I not satisfied that such is the present case, I certainly would be no advocate of the proposition now before the House.

Sir, I might prove the war, should it ensue, justifiable, by the express admission

of the gentleman from Virginia;—and necessary, by facts undoubted, and universally admitted; such as he did not pretend to controvert. The extent, duration, and character of the injuries received; the failure of those peaceful means heretofore resorted to for the redress of our wrongs, are my proofs that it is necessary. Why should I mention the impressment of our seamen; depredations on every branch of our commerce, including the direct export trade, continued for years, and made under laws which professedly undertake to regulate our trade with other nations; negotiation resorted to, again and again, till it is become hopeless; the restrictive system persisted in to avoid war, and in the vain expectation of returning justice? The evil still grows, and, in each succeeding year, swells in extent and pretension beyond the preceding. The question, even in the opinion and by the admission of our opponents, is reduced to this single point—Which shall we do, abandon or defend our own commercial and maritime rights, and the personal liberties of our

citizens employed in exercising them? These rights are vitally attacked, and war is the only means of redress. The gentleman from Virginia has suggested none, unless we consider the whole of his speech as recommending patient and resigned submission as the best remedy. Sir, which alternative this House will embrace, it is not for me to say. I hope the decision is made already, by a higher authority than the voice of any man. It is not for the human tongue to instil the sense of independence and honor. This is the work of nature; a generous nature that disdains tame submission to wrongs.

This part of the subject is so imposing as to enforce silence even on the gentleman from Virginia. He dared not deny his country's wrongs, or vindicate the conduct of her enemy. Only one part of his argument had any, the most remote, relation to this point. He would not say we had not a good cause for war; but insisted that it was our duty to define that cause. If he means that this House ought, at this stage

of its proceedings, or any other, to specify any particular violation of our rights to the exclusion of all others, he prescribes a course which neither good sense nor the usage of nations warrants. When we contend, let us contend for all our rights; the doubtful and the certain; the unimportant and essential. It is as easy to struggle, or even more so, for the whole as for a part. At the termination of the contest, secure all that our wisdom and valor and the fortune of the war will permit. This is the dictate of common sense; such also is the usage of nations. The single instance alluded to, the endeavor of Mr. Fox to compel Mr. Pitt to define the object of the war against France, will not support the gentleman from Virginia in his position. That was an extraordinary war for an extraordinary purpose, and was not governed by the usual rules. It was not for conquest, or for redress of injury, but to impose a government on France, which she refused to receive, an object so detestable that an avowal dared not be made.



Sir, I might here rest the question. The affirmative of the proposition is established. I cannot but advert, however, to the complaint of the gentleman from Virginia when he was first up on this question. He said he found himself reduced to the necessity of supporting the negative side of the question, before the affirmative was established. Let me tell the gentleman, that there is no hardship in his case. It is not every affirmative that ought to be proved. Were I to affirm, that the House is now in session, would it be reasonable to ask for proof? He who would deny its truth, on him would be the proof of so extraordinary a negative. How then could the gentleman, after his admissions, with the facts before him and the country, complain? The causes are such as to warrant, or rather make it indispensable, in any nation not absolutely dependent, to defend its rights by force. Let him, then, show the reasons why we ought not so to defend ourselves. On him lies the burden of proof. This he has attempted; he has endeavored to support his

negative. Before I proceed to answer him particularly, let me call the attention of the House to one circumstance; that is,—that almost the whole of his arguments consisted of an enumeration of evils always incident to war, however just and necessary; and which, if they have any force, are calculated to produce unqualified submission to every species of insult and injury. I do not feel myself bound to answer arguments of this description; and if I should touch on them, it will be only incidentally, and not for the purpose of serious refutation.

The first argument of the gentleman which I shall notice is the unprepared state of the country. Whatever weight this argument might have in a question of immediate war, it surely has little in that of preparation for it. If our country is unprepared, let us remedy the evil as soon as possible. Let the gentleman submit his plan; and if a reasonable one, I doubt not it will be supported by the House. But, sir, let us admit the fact and the whole force of the argument. I ask whose is the fault? Who

has been a member, for many years past, and seen the defenceless state of his country even near home, under his own eyes, without a single endeavor to remedy so serious an evil? Let him not say, "I have acted in a minority." It is no less the duty of the minority than a majority to endeavor to defend the country. For that purpose we are sent here, and not for that of opposition.

We are next told of the expenses of the war; and that the people will not pay taxes. Why not? Is it from want of means? What, with 1,000,000 tons of shipping; a commerce of \$100,000,000 annually; manufactures yielding a yearly product of \$150,000,000; and agriculture of thrice that amount, shall we be told the country wants capacity to raise and support ten thousand or fifteen thousand additional regulars? No; it has the ability; that is admitted; and will it not have the disposition? Is not the cause a just and necessary one? Shall we then utter this libel on the people? Where will proof be found of a

fact so disgraceful? It is answered: In the history of the country twelve or fifteen years ago. The case is not parallel. The ability of the country is greatly increased since. The whiskey tax was unpopular. But on this, as well as my memory serves me, the objection was not to the tax or its amount, but the mode of collection. The people were startled by the number of officers; their love of liberty shocked with the multiplicity of regulations. We, in the spirit of imitation, copied from the most oppressive part of European laws on the subject of taxes, and imposed on a young and virtuous people all the severe provisions made necessary by corruption and long-practiced evasions. If taxes should become necessary, I do not hesitate to say the people will pay cheerfully. It is for their government and their cause, and it would be their interest and their duty to pay. But it may be, and I believe was said, that the people will not pay taxes, because the rights violated are not worth defending; or that the defence will cost more than the

gain. Sir, I here enter my solemn protest against this low and "calculating avarice" entering this hall of legislation. It is only fit for shops and counting-houses; and ought not to disgrace the seat of power by its squalid aspect. Whenever it touches sovereign power, the nation is ruined. It is too short-sighted to defend itself. It is a compromising spirit, always ready to yield a part to save the residue. It is too timid to have in itself the laws of self-preservation. It is never safe but under the shield of honor. There is, sir, one principle necessary to make us a great people,—to produce not the form, but real spirit of union;—and that is, to protect every citizen in the lawful pursuit of his business. He will then feel that he is backed by the government;—that its arm is his arm; and will rejoice in its increased strength and prosperity. Protection and patriotism are reciprocal. This is the way which has led nations to greatness. Sir, I am not versed in this calculating policy; and will not, therefore, pretend to estimate

in dollars and cents the value of national independence. I cannot measure in shillings and pence the misery, the stripes, and the slavery of our impressed seamen; nor even the value of our shipping, commercial and agricultural losses, under the orders in council, and the British system of blockade. In thus expressing myself, I do not intend to condemn any prudent estimate of the means of a country, before it enters on a war. This is wisdom,—the other folly. The gentleman from Virginia has not failed to touch on the calamity of war, that fruitful source of declamation by which humanity is made the advocate of submission. If he desires to repress the gallant ardor of our countrymen by such topics, let me inform him that true courage regards only the cause, that it is just and necessary; and that it contemns the sufferings and dangers of war. If he really wishes to promote the cause of humanity, let his eloquence be addressed to Lord Wellesley or Mr. Percival, and not the American Congress. Tell them if they

persist in such daring insult and injury to a neutral nation, that, however inclined to peace, it will be bound in honor and safety to resist; that their patience and endurance, however great, will be exhausted; that the calamity of war will ensue, and that they, in the opinion of the world, will be answerable for all its devastation and misery. Let a regard to the interests of humanity stay the hand of injustice, and my life on it, the gentleman will not find it difficult to dissuade his country from rushing into the bloody scenes of war.

We are next told of the dangers of war. I believe we are all ready to acknowledge its hazards and misfortunes; but I cannot think we have any extraordinary danger to apprehend, at least none to warrant an acquiescence in the injuries we have received.

On the contrary, I believe, no war can be less dangerous to the internal peace or safety of the country. But we are told of the black population of the Southern States. As far as the gentleman from

Virginia speaks of his own personal knowledge, I shall not question the correctness of his statement. I only regret that is the state of apprehension in his part of the country. Of the South section, I, too, have some personal knowledge; and can say, that in South Carolina no such fears in any part are felt. I admit the gentleman's statement; a war with Great Britain increase danger? Will the country be less able to suppress insurrection? Had we anything to fear from that quarter (which I do not believe), in my opinion, the period of greatest safety is during a war; and indeed, the enemy should make a lodgment in the country. Then the country is on its guard; our militia the best prepared and our standing army the greatest. In our revolution no attempts at insurrection were made by that portion of our population and however the gentleman may attribute to himself with the disorganizing effect of French principles, I cannot think our ignorant blacks have felt much of their ban-



influence. I dare say more than one-half of them never heard of the French Revolution.

But as great as he regards the danger from our slaves, the gentleman's fears end not there—the standing army is not less terrible to him. Sir, I think a regular force raised for a period of actual hostilities cannot properly be called a standing army. There is a just distinction between such a force, and one raised as a permanent peace establishment. Whatever would be the composition of the latter, I hope the former will consist of some of the best materials of the country. The ardent patriotism of our young men, and the reasonable bounty in land which is proposed to be given, will impel them to join their country's standard and to fight her battles; they will not forget the citizen in the soldier, and in obeying their officers, learn to condemn their government and Constitution. In our officers and soldiers we will find patriotism no less pure and ardent than in the private citizen; but if they should be depraved as repre-

sented, what have we to fear from twenty-five thousand or thirty thousand regulars? Where will be the boasted militia of the gentleman? Can one million of militia be overpowered by thirty thousand regulars? If so, how can we rely on them against a foe invading our country? Sir, I have no such contemptuous idea of our militia—their untaught bravery is sufficient to crush all foreign and internal attempts on their country's liberties.

But we have not yet come to the end of the chapter of dangers. The gentleman's imagination, so fruitful on this subject, conceives that our constitution is not calculated for war, and that it cannot stand its rude shock. This is rather extraordinary. If true, we must then depend upon the commiseration or contempt of other nations for our existence. The Constitution, then, it seems, has failed in an essential object, "to provide for the common defence." No, says the gentleman from Virginia, it is competent for a defensive, but not for an offensive war. It is not necessary

for me to expose the error of this opinion. Why make the distinction in this instance? Will he pretend to say that this is an offensive war; a war of conquest? Yes, the gentleman has dared to make this assertion; and for reasons no less extraordinary than the assertion itself. He says our rights are violated on the ocean, and that these violations affect our shipping, and commercial rights, to which the Canadas have no relation. The doctrine of retaliation has been much abused of late by an unreasonable extension; we have now to witness a new abuse. The gentleman from Virginia has limited it down to a point. By his rule if you receive a blow on the breast, you dare not return it on the head; you are obliged to measure and return it on the precise point on which it was received. If you do not proceed with this mathematical accuracy, it ceases to be just self-defence; it becomes an unprovoked attack.

In speaking of Canada the gentleman from Virginia introduced the name of

Montgomery with much feeling and interest. Sir, there is danger in that name to the gentleman's argument. It is sacred to heroism. It is indignant of submission! It calls our memory back to the time of our revolution, to the Congress of '74 and '75. Suppose a member of that day had risen and urged all the arguments which we have heard on this subject; had told that Congress,—your contest is about the right of laying a tax; and that the attempt on Canada had nothing to do with it; that the war would be expensive; that danger and devastation would overspread our country, and that the power of Great Britain was irresistible. With what sentiment, think you, would such doctrines have been then received? Happy for us, they had no force at that period of our country's glory. Had such been then acted on, this hall would never have witnessed a great people convened to deliberate for the general good; a mighty empire, with prouder prospects than any nation the sun ever shone on, would not have risen in the

west. No; we would have been base subjected colonies; governed by that imperious rod which Britain holds over her distant provinces.

The gentleman from Virginia attributes the preparation for war to everything but its true cause. He endeavored to find it in the probable rise in the price of hemp. He represents the people of the Western states as willing to plunge our country into war from such interested and base motives. I will not reason on this point. I see the cause of their ardor, not in such unworthy motives, but in their known patriotism and disinterestedness.

No less mercenary is the reason which he attributes to the Southern states. He says that the Non-Importation Act has reduced cotton to nothing, which has produced a feverish impatience. Sir, I acknowledge the cotton of our plantations is worth but little; but not for the cause assigned by the gentleman from Virginia. The people of that section do not reason as he does; they do not attribute it to the efforts of their government

to maintain the peace and independence of their country. They see, in the low price of their produce, the hand of foreign injustice; they know well without the market to the continent the deep and steady current of supply will glut that of Great Britain; they are not prepared for the colonial state to which again that power is endeavoring to reduce us, and the manly spirit of that section of our country will not submit to be regulated by any foreign power.

The love of France and the hatred of England have also been assigned as the cause of the present measures. France has not done us justice, says the gentleman from Virginia, and how can we, without partiality, resist the aggressions of England. I know, sir, we have still causes of complaint against France; but they are of a different character from those against England. She professes now to respect our rights, and there cannot be a reasonable doubt but that the most objectionable parts of her decrees, as far as they respect us, are

repealed. We have already formally acknowledged this to be a fact. But I protest against the principle from which his conclusion is drawn. It is a novel doctrine, and nowhere avowed out of this House, that you cannot select your antagonist without being guilty of partiality. Sir, when two invade your rights, you may resist both or either at your pleasure. It is regulated by prudence and not by right. The stale imputation of partiality for France is better calculated for the columns of a newspaper than for the walls of this House.

The gentleman from Virginia is at a loss to account for what he calls our hatred to England. He asks how can we hate the country of Locke, of Newton, Hampden, and Chatham; a country having the same language and customs with ourselves, and descending from a common ancestry. Sir, the laws of human affections are steady and uniform. If we have so much to attach us to that country, potent indeed must be the cause which has overpowered it. Yes, there is a cause strong enough; not in that

occult courtly affection which he has supposed to be entertained for France; but it is to be found in continued and unprovoked insult and injury—a cause so manifest that the gentleman from Virginia had to exert much ingenuity to overlook it. But the gentleman, in his eager admiration of that country, has not been sufficiently guarded in his argument. Has he reflected on the cause of that admiration? Has he examined the reasons of our high regard for her Chatham? It is his ardent patriotism, the heroic courage of his mind, that could not brook the least insult or injury offered to his country, but thought that her interest and honor ought to be vindicated at every hazard and expense. I hope, when we are called upon to admire, we shall also be asked to imitate. I hope the gentleman does not wish a monopoly of those great virtues for England.

The balance of power has also been introduced, as an argument for submission. England is said to be a barrier against the military despotism of France. There is,



sir, one great error in our legislation. We are ready, it would seem from this argument, to watch over the interests of foreign nations, while we grossly neglect our own immediate concerns. This argument of the balance of power is well calculated for the British Parliament, but not at all suited to the American Congress. Tell the former that they have to contend with a mighty power, and that if they persist in insult and injury to the American people, they will compel them to throw their whole weight into the scale of their enemy. Paint the danger to them, and if they will desist from injuring us, we, I answer for it, will not disturb the balance of power. But it is absurd for us to talk about the balance of power, while they, by their conduct, smile with contempt at what they regard our simple, good-natured vanity. If, however, in the contest, it should be found that they underrate us—which I hope and believe—and that we can affect the balance of power, it will not be difficult for us to obtain such terms as our rights demand.

I, sir, will now conclude by adverting to an argument of the gentleman from Virginia, used in debate on a preceding day. He asked: Why not declare war immediately? The answer is obvious: because we are not yet prepared. But, says the gentleman, such language as is here held will provoke Great Britain to commence hostilities. I have no such fears. She knows well that such a course would unite all parties here—a thing which, above all others, she most dreads. Besides, such has been our past conduct, that she will still calculate on our patience and submission, until war is actually commenced.

## JOHN C. CALHOUN

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### SPEECH ON THE RECEPTION OF ABOLITION PETITIONS, DELIVERED IN THE SENATE, FEBRUARY 6, 1837

If the time of the Senate permitted, I would feel it to be my duty to call for the reading of the mass of petitions on the table, in order that we might know what language they hold toward the slaveholding states and their institutions; but as it will not, I have selected indiscriminately from the pile, two; one from those in manuscript, and the other from the printed, and without knowing their contents will call for the reading of them, so that we may judge, by them, of the character of the whole.

(Here the Secretary, on the call of Mr. Calhoun, read the two petitions.)

Such, resumed Mr. C., is the language held toward us and ours. The peculiar institution of the South, that, on the maintenance of which the very existence of the

slaveholding states depends, is pronounced to be sinful and odious, in the sight of God and man; and this with a systematic design of rendering us hateful in the eyes of the world—with a view to a general crusade against us and our institutions. This, too, in the legislative halls of the Union; created by these confederated states, for the better protection of their peace, their safety, and their respective institutions;—and yet we, the representatives of twelve of these sovereign states against whom this deadly war is waged, are expected to sit here in silence, hearing ourselves and our constituents day after day denounced, without uttering a word; for if we but open our lips, the charge of agitation is resounded on all sides, and we are held up as seeking to aggravate the evil which we resist. Every reflecting mind must see in all this a state of things deeply and dangerously diseased.

I do not belong, said Mr. C., to the school which holds that aggression is to be met by concession. Mine is the opposite creed, which teaches that encroachments must be

met at the beginning, and that those who act on the opposite principle are prepared to become slaves. In this case, in particular, I hold concession or compromise to be fatal. If we concede an inch, concession would follow concession—compromise would follow compromise, until our ranks would be so broken that effectual resistance would be impossible. We must meet the enemy on the frontier, with a fixed determination of maintaining our position at every hazard. Consent to receive these insulting petitions, and the next demand will be that they be referred to a committee in order that they may be deliberated and acted upon. At the last session we were modestly asked to receive them, simply to lay them on the table, without any view to ulterior action. I then told the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. Buchanan), who so strongly urged that course in the Senate, that it was a position that could not be maintained; as the argument in favor of acting on the petitions, if we were bound to receive, could not be resisted. I then said that the next step

would be to refer the petition to a committee, and I already see indications that such is now the intention. If we yield, that will be followed by another, and we will thus proceed, step by step, to the final consummation of the object of these petitions. We are now told that the most effectual mode of arresting the progress of abolition is to reason it down; and with this view it is urged that the petitions ought to be referred to a committee. That is the very ground which was taken at the last session in the other House, but instead of arresting its progress it has since advanced more rapidly than ever. The most unquestionable right may be rendered doubtful, if once admitted to be a subject of controversy, and that would be the case in the present instance. The subject is beyond the jurisdiction of Congress—they have no right to touch it in any shape or form, or to make it the subject of deliberation or discussion.

In opposition to this view it is urged that Congress is bound by the Constitution to receive petitions in every case and on every

subject, whether within its constitutional competency or not. I hold the doctrine to be absurd, and do solemnly believe, that it would be as easy to prove that it has the right to abolish slavery, as that it is bound to receive petitions for that purpose. The very existence of the rule that requires a question to be put on the reception of petitions, is conclusive to show that there is no such obligation. It has been a standing rule from the commencement of the government, and clearly shows the sense of those who formed the Constitution on this point. The question on the reception would be absurd, if, as is contended, we are bound to receive; but I do not intend to argue the question; I discussed it fully at the last session, and the arguments then advanced neither have been nor can be answered.

As widely as this incendiary spirit has spread, it has not yet infected this body, or the great mass of the intelligent and business portion of the North; but unless it be speedily stopped, it will spread and work upward till it brings the two great sections

of the Union into deadly conflict. not a new impression with me. years since, in a discussion with one Senators from Massachusetts (Mr. W before this fell spirit had showed i then predicted that the doctrine proclamation and the Force Bill—the government had a right, in the last to determine the extent of its own ) and enforce its decision at the point bayonet, which was so warmly mai by that Senator—would at no dista arouse the dormant spirit of abolit I told him that the doctrine was mount to the assumption of un power on the part of the governme that such would be the impression public mind in a large portion of the The consequence would be inevitall large portion of the Northern states b slavery to be a sin, and would consid an obligation of conscience to aboli they should feel themselves in any responsible for its continuance,—an this doctrine would necessarily lead



belief of such responsibility. I then predicted that it would commence as it has with this fanatical portion of society, and that they would begin their operations on the ignorant, the weak, the young, and the thoughtless,—and gradually extend upwards till they would become strong enough to obtain political control, when he and others holding the highest stations in society, would, however reluctant, be compelled to yield to their doctrines, or be driven into obscurity. But four years have since elapsed, and all this is already in a course of regular fulfilment.

Standing at the point of time at which we have now arrived, it will not be more difficult to trace the course of future events now than it was then. They who imagine that the spirit now abroad in the North will die away of itself without a shock or convulsion, have formed a very inadequate conception of its real character; it will continue to rise and spread, unless prompt and efficient measures to stay its progress be adopted. Already it has taken possession


of the pulpit, of the schools, and, to a considerable extent, of the press; those great instruments by which the mind of the rising generation will be formed.

However sound the great body of the non-slaveholding states are at present, in the course of a few years they will be succeeded by those who will have been taught to hate the people and institutions of nearly one-half of this Union, with a hatred more deadly than one hostile nation ever entertained toward another. It is easy to see the end. By the necessary course of events, if left to themselves, we must become, finally, two people. It is impossible under the deadly hatred which must spring up between the two great sections, if the present causes are permitted to operate unchecked, that we should continue under the same political system. The conflicting elements would burst the Union asunder, powerful as are the links which hold it together. Abolition and the Union cannot co-exist. As the friend of the Union I openly proclaim it,—and the sooner it is

known the better. The former may now be controlled, but in a short time it will be beyond the power of man to arrest the course of events. We of the South will not, cannot, surrender our institutions. To maintain the existing relations between the two races, inhabiting that section of the Union, is indispensable to the peace and happiness of both. It cannot be subverted without drenching the country in blood, and extirpating one or the other of the races. Be it good or bad, it has grown up with our society and institutions, and is so interwoven with them, that to destroy it would be to destroy us as a people. But let me not be understood as admitting, even by implication, that the existing relations between the two races in the slaveholding states is an evil:—far otherwise; I hold it to be a good, as it has thus far proved itself to be to both, and will continue to prove so if not disturbed by the fell spirit of abolition. I appeal to facts. Never before has the black race of Central Africa, from the dawn of history to the present day, attained

a condition so civilized and so improved, not only physically, but morally and intellectually. It came among us in a low, degraded, and savage condition, and in the course of a few generations it has grown up under the fostering care of our institutions, reviled as they have been, to its present comparatively civilized condition. This, with the rapid increase of numbers, is conclusive proof of the general happiness of the race, in spite of all the exaggerated tales to the contrary.

In the meantime, the white or European race has not degenerated. It has kept pace with its brethren in other sections of the Union where slavery does not exist. It is odious to make comparison; but I appeal to all sides whether the South is not equal in virtue, intelligence, patriotism, courage, disinterestedness, and all the high qualities which adorn our nature. I ask whether we have not contributed our full share of talents and political wisdom in forming and sustaining this political fabric; and whether we have not constantly inclined




most strongly to the side of liberty, and been the first to see and first to resist the encroachments of power. In one thing only are we inferior—the arts of gain; we acknowledge that we are less wealthy than the Northern section of this Union, but I trace this mainly to the fiscal action of this government, which has extracted much from, and spent little among us. Had it been the reverse,—if the exaction had been from the other section, and the expenditure with us, this point of superiority would not be against us now, as it was not at the formation of this government.

But I take higher ground. I hold that in the present state of civilization, where two races of different origin, and distinguished by color, and other physical differences, as well as intellectual, are brought together, the relation now existing in the slaveholding states between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good—a positive good. I feel myself called upon to speak freely upon the subject where the honor and interests of those I represent are involved. I

hold, then, that there never has yet a wealthy and civilized society in which a portion of the community did not, in fact, live on the labor of the other. and general as is this assertion, it is borne out by history. This is not the occasion, but if it were, it would be difficult to trace the various devices by which the wealth of all civilized communities has been so unequally divided, and by what means so small a share has been allotted to those by whose labor the wealth is produced, and so large a share given to non-producing classes. The devices are most innumerable, from the brutal and gross superstition of ancient times to the subtle and artful fiscal contrivances of modern times. I might well challenge the comparison between them and the more simple, and patriarchal mode by which the labor of the African race is, among us, commanded by the European. In fact, with truth, that in few countries so much is left to the share of the laborer, and so little exacted from him, or where the

more kind attention paid to him in sickness or infirmities of age. Compare his condition with the tenants of the poorhouses in the more civilized portions of Europe—look at the sick, and the old and infirm slave, on one hand, in the midst of his family and friends, under the kind superintending care of his master and mistress, and compare it with the forlorn and wretched condition of the pauper in the poorhouse. But I will not dwell on this aspect of the question; I turn to the political; and here I fearlessly assert that the existing relation between the two races in the South, against which these blind fanatics are waging war, forms the most solid and durable foundation on which to rear free and stable political institutions. It is useless to disguise the fact. There is and always has been in an advanced stage of wealth and civilization a conflict between labor and capital. The condition of society in the South exempts us from the disorders and dangers resulting from this conflict; and which explains why it is that the political condition of the slave-

holding states has been so much more stable and quiet than that of the North. The advantages of the former, in this respect, will become more and more manifest if left undisturbed by interference from without, as the country advances in wealth and numbers. We have, in fact, but just entered that condition of society where the strength and durability of our political institutions are to be tested; and I venture nothing in predicting that the experience of the next generation will fully test how vastly more favorable our condition of society is to that of other sections for free and stable institutions, provided we are not disturbed by the interference of others, or shall have sufficient intelligence and spirit to resist promptly and successfully such interference. It rests with ourselves to meet and repel them. I look not for aid to this government, or to the other states; not but there are kind feelings toward us on the part of the great body of the non-slaveholding states; but as kind as their feelings may be, we may rest assured that no political party





in those states will risk their ascendancy for our safety. If we do not defend ourselves none will defend us; if we yield we will be more and more pressed as we recede; and if we submit we will be trampled under foot. Be assured that emancipation itself would not satisfy these fanatics:—that gained, the next step would be to raise the negroes to a social and political equality with the whites; and that being effected, we would soon find the present condition of the two races reversed. They and their Northern allies would be the masters, and we the slaves; the condition of the white race in the British West India Islands, bad as it is, would be happiness to ours. There the mother country is interested in sustaining the supremacy of the European race. It is true that the authority of the former master is destroyed, but the African will there still be a slave, not to individuals but to the community,—forced to labor, not by the authority of the overseer, but by the bayonet of the soldiery and the rod of the civil magistrate.

Surrounded as the slaveholding states are with such imminent perils, I rejoice to think that our means of defence are ample, if we shall prove to have the intelligence and spirit to see and apply them before it is too late. All we want is concert, to lay aside all party differences, and unite with zeal and energy in repelling approaching dangers. Let there be concert of action, and we shall find ample means of security without resorting to secession or disunion. I speak with full knowledge and a thorough examination of the subject, and, for one, see my way clearly. One thing alarms me—the eager pursuit of gain which overspreads the land, and which absorbs every faculty of the mind and every feeling of the heart. Of all passions avarice is the most blind and compromising—the last to see and the first to yield to danger. I dare not hope that anything I can say will arouse the South to a due sense of danger; I fear it is beyond the power of mortal voice to awaken it in time from the fatal security into which it has fallen.

## JOHN C. CALHOUN

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### ADDRESS IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES ON THE SUBJECT OF SLAVERY

(Read for him by Hon. Mr. Mason, March 4, 1850)

Editor's Note.—It was thought best not to abridge this very noteworthy speech of Mr. Calhoun's, though it is considerably longer than most of those chosen for the present work, for the reason that it summarizes exhaustively the whole "Southern Question" of that period.

I have, Senators, believed from the first that the agitation of the subject of slavery would, if not prevented by some timely and effective measure, end in disunion. Entertaining this opinion, I have, on all proper occasions, endeavored to call the attention of both the two great parties which divide the country, to adopt some measure to prevent so great a disaster, but without success. The agitation has been permitted to proceed, with almost no attempt to resist it, until it has reached a period when it can no longer be disguised or denied that the Union is in danger. You have thus had forced

upon you the greatest and the gravest question that ever can come under your consideration: How can the Union be preserved?

To give a satisfactory answer to this mighty question, it is indispensable to have an accurate and thorough knowledge of the nature and the character of the cause by which the Union is endangered. Without such knowledge it is impossible to pronounce, with any certainty, by what measure it can be saved; just as it would be impossible for a physician to pronounce, in the case of some dangerous disease, with any certainty, by what remedy the patient could be saved, without similar knowledge of the nature and character of the cause of the disease. The first question, then, presented for consideration, in the investigation I propose, in order to obtain such knowledge, is: What is it that has endangered the Union?

To this question there can be but one answer—that the immediate cause is the almost universal discontent which pervades

all the states composing the Southern section of the Union. This widely extended discontent is not of recent origin. It commenced with the agitation of the slavery question, and has been increasing ever since. The next question is: What has caused this wide-diffused and almost universal discontent?

It is a great mistake to suppose, as is by some, that it originated with demagogues, who excited the discontent with the intention of aiding their personal advancement, or with disappointed, ambitious individuals, who resorted to it as the means of raising their fallen fortunes. There is no foundation for this opinion. On the contrary, all the great political influences of the section were arrayed against excitement, and exerted to the utmost to keep the people quiet. The great mass of the people of the South were divided, as in the other section, into Whigs and Democrats. The leaders and the presses of both parties in the South were very solicitous to prevent excitement and restore quiet; because it was seen that

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the effects of the former would necessarily tend to weaken, if not destroy, the political ties which united them with their respective parties in the other section. Those who know the strength of party ties will readily appreciate the immense force which this cause exerted against agitation, and in favor of preserving quiet. But, as great as it was, it was not sufficiently so to prevent the widespread discontent which now pervades the section. No; some cause far deeper and more powerful must exist to produce a discontent so wide and deep, than the one inferred. The question then recurs: What is the cause of this discontent? It will be found in the belief of the people of the Southern states, as prevalent as the discontent itself, that they cannot remain, as things now are, consistently with honor and safety, in the Union. The next question, then, to be considered, is: What has caused this belief?

One of the causes is, undoubtedly, to be traced to the long-continued agitation of the slave question on the part of the North,

and the many aggressions which they have made on the rights of the South, during the time. I will not enumerate them at present, as it will be done hereafter in its proper place.

There is another, lying back of it, but with which this is intimately connected, that may be regarded as the great and primary cause. It is to be found in the fact that the equilibrium between the two sections in the government, as it stood when the Constitution was ratified and the government put in action, has been destroyed. At that time, there was nearly a perfect equilibrium between the two, which afforded ample means to each to protect itself against the aggression of the other; but as it now stands, one section has exclusive power of controlling the government, which leaves the other without any adequate means of protecting itself against its encroachment and oppression. To place this subject distinctly before you, I have, Senators, prepared a brief statistical statement, showing the relative weight of the two sections

in the government, under the first census of 1790, and the last census of 1840.

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The result of the whole is to give the Northern section a predominance in every department of the government, and thus concentrate in it the two elements which constitute the federal government—majority of states, and a majority of their population, estimated in federal numbers. Whatever section concentrates the two in itself must possess control of the entire government.

But we are just at the close of the sixth decade, and the commencement of the seventh. The census is to be taken this year, which must add greatly to the decided preponderance of the North in the House of Representatives, and in the electoral college. The prospect is, also, that a great increase will be added to its present preponderance during the period of the decade, by the addition of new states. Two territories—Oregon and Minnesota—are already in progress, and strenuous efforts are making



to bring in three additional states from the territory recently conquered from Mexico, which, if successful, will add three other states in a short time to the Northern section, making five states, and increasing its present number of states from 15 to 20, and of its Senators from 30 to 40. On the contrary, there is not a single territory in progress in the Southern section, and no certainty that any additional state will be added to it during the decade.

The prospect then is, that the two sections in the Senate, should the efforts now made to exclude the South from the newly conquered territories succeed, will stand, before the end of the decade, twenty Northern states to twelve Southern (conceding Delaware as neutral) and forty Northern Senators to twenty-four Southern. This great increase of Senators added to the great increase of members of the House of Representatives, and electoral college, on the part of the North, which must take place upon the next decade, will effectually and eventually destroy the equilibrium which

existed when the government commenced.

Had this destruction been the operation of time, without the interference of government, the South would have had no reason to complain; but such was not the fact. It was caused by the legislation of this government, which was appointed as the common agent of all, and charged with the protection of the interests and security of all. The legislation by which it has been effected may be classed under three heads. The first is that series of acts by which the South has been excluded from the common territory belonging to all of the states, as the members of the Federal Union, which has had the effect of extending vastly the portion allotted to the Northern section, and restricting within narrow limits the portion left the South. The next consists in adopting a system of revenue and disbursements by which an undue proportion of the burthen of taxation has been imposed upon the South, and an undue proportion of its proceeds appropriated to the North; and the last in a system of political measures by

which the original character of the government has been radically changed.

I propose to bestow upon each of these, in order as they stand, a few remarks, with the view of showing that it is owing to the action of this government that the equilibrium between the two sections has been destroyed; and the whole power of the system centred in a sectional majority.

The first of the series of acts by which the South was deprived of its due share of the territories originated with the confederacy which preceded the existence of this government. It is to be found in the provisions of the ordinance of 1787. Its effect was to exclude the South entirely from that vast and fertile region which lies between the Ohio and the Mississippi, now embracing five states and one territory. The next of the series is the Missouri compromise, which excluded the South from that large portion of Louisiana which lies north of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , excepting what is included in the state of Missouri. The last of the series excludes the South from the whole of the

Oregon territory. All these in the slang of the day were what is called slave territory, and not free soil; that is, territories belonging to slaveholding powers, and open to the emigration of masters with their slaves. By these several acts the South was excluded from 1,238,025 square miles, an extent of country considerably exceeding the entire valley of the Mississippi.


To the South was left the portion of the territory of Louisiana lying south of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , and the portion north of it included in the state of Missouri; the portion lying south of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  includes the state of Louisiana and Arkansas, and the territory lying west of the latter and south of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  called the Indian country. A portion lying south of this, with the territory of Florida, now the state, makes in the whole 283,503 square miles. To this must be added the territory acquired with Texas. If the whole should be added to the Southern section, it would make an increase of 325,520, which would make the whole left to the South 609,023. But a large part of Texas is still in contest

between the two sections, which leaves uncertain what will be the real extent of the portion of her territory that may be left to the South.

I have not included the territory recently acquired by the treaty with Mexico. The North is making the most strenuous efforts to appropriate the whole to herself, by excluding the South from every foot of it. If she should succeed, it will add to that from which Southern laws have already been excluded 527,078 square miles, and would increase the whole the North has appropriated to herself, to 1,764,023, not including the portion which she may succeed in excluding us from in Texas. To sum up the whole, the United States, since they declared their independence, have acquired 2,373,046 square miles of territory, from which the North will have excluded the South, if she should succeed in monopolizing the newly acquired territories, about three-fourths of the whole, and leave the South but about one-fourth.

Such is the first and great cause that has

and the increase of their descendants, which has been attracted to the Northern section from Europe and the Southern section, in consequence of the advantages derived from the causes assigned. If they had not existed—if the South had retained all the capital which has been extracted from her by the fiscal action of the government, and if they had not been excluded, by the ordinance of 1787 and the Missouri compromise, from the region lying between the Ohio and the Mississippi, and between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains, north of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , it scarcely admits of a doubt that she would have divided the emigration with the North, and by retaining her own people, would have at least equalled the North in population, under the census of 1840, and probably under that about to be taken. She would also, if she had retained her equal rights in those territories, have maintained an equality in the number of states with the North, and have preserved the equilibrium between the two sections that existed at the commencement of the government. The



loss, then, of the equilibrium, is to be attributed to the action of this government.

But while these measures were destroying the equilibrium between the two sections, the action of government was leading to a radical change in its character by concentrating all the power of the system in itself. The occasion will not permit me to trace the measures by which this great change has been consummated. If it did, it would not be difficult to show that the process commenced at an early period of the government; that it proceeded almost without interruption, step by step, until it absorbed, virtually, its entire powers. Without, however, going through the whole process to establish the fact, it may be done satisfactorily by a very short statement.

That this government claims, and practically maintains, the right to decide in the last resort, as to the extent of its powers, will scarcely be denied by any one conversant with the political history of the country. It is equally certain that it also claims the right to resort to force, to main-

tain whatever power she claims against all opposition. Indeed, it is apparent from what we daily hear, that this has become the prevailing and fixed opinion of a great majority of the community. Now I ask, what limitation can possibly be placed upon the powers of a government claiming and exercising such rights? And, if none can be, how can the separate government of the states maintain and protect the powers reserved to them by the Constitution, or the people of the several states maintain those which are reserved to them, and among them, their sovereign powers, by which they ordained and established, not only their separate state constitutions and governments, but also the Constitution and government of the United States? But if they have no constitutional means of maintaining them against the right claimed by this government, it necessarily follows that they hold them at its pleasure and discretion, and that all the powers of the system are, in reality, concentrated in it. It also follows that the character of the govern-



ment has been changed in consequence, from a Federal Republic, as it originally came from the hands of its framers, and that it has been changed into a great national consolidated democracy. It has, indeed, at present, all the characteristics of the latter, and not one of the former, although it still retains its outward form.

The result of the whole of these causes combined, is that the North has acquired a decided ascendancy over every department of this government, and through it, a control over all the powers of the system. A single section, governed by the will of the numerical majority, has now, in fact, the control of the government, and the entire powers of the system. What was once a constitutional Federal Republic, is now converted, in reality, into one as absolute as that of the autocrat of Russia, and as despotic in its tendency as any absolute government that ever existed.

As, then, the North has the absolute control over the government, it is manifest that on all questions between it and the South,

where there is a diversity of interests, the interest of the latter will be sacrificed to the former, however oppressive the effects may be, as the South possesses no means by which it can resist, through the action of the government. But if there were no questions of vital importance to the South, in reference to which there was a diversity of views between the two sections, this state of things might be endured, without the hazard of destruction by the South. But such is not the fact. There is a question of vital importance to the Southern section, in reference to which the views and feelings of the two sections are opposite and hostile as they can possibly be.

I refer to the relation between the two races in the Southern section, which constitutes a vital portion of her social organization. Every portion of the North entertains views and feelings more or less hostile to it. Those most opposed and hostile regard it as a sin, and consider themselves under the most sacred obligation to use every effort to destroy it. Indeed, to the extent that

they conceive they have power, they regard themselves as implicated in the sin, and responsible for suppressing it, by the use of all and every means. Those less opposed and hostile regard it as a crime—an offence against humanity, as they call it, and although not so fanatical, feel themselves bound to use all efforts to effect the same object, while those who are least opposed and hostile regard it as a blot and a stain on the character of what they call the nation, and feel themselves accordingly bound to give it no countenance or support. On the contrary, the Southern section regards the relation as one which cannot be destroyed without subjecting the two races to the greatest calamity, and the section to poverty, desolation and wretchedness, and accordingly feel bound, by every consideration of interest, safety and duty, to defend it.

This hostile feeling on the part of the North toward the social organization of the South long lay dormant; but it only required some cause, which would make the impression on those who felt most intensely

that they were responsible for its continuance, to call it into action. The increasing power of this government, and of the control of the Northern section over all of it, furnished the cause. It was they made an impression on the minds of many, that there was little or no restraint to prevent the government to do whatever it might choose to do. This was sufficient of itself to put the most fanatical portion of the North in action, for the purpose of destroying the existing relation between the two races in the South.

The first organized movement toward it commenced in 1835. Then, for the first time, societies were organized, presses established, lecturers sent forth to excite the people of the North, and incendiary publications scattered over the whole South through the mail. The South was thoroughly aroused; meetings were held everywhere, and resolutions adopted, calling upon the North to apply a remedy to arrest the threatened evil, and pledging themselves to adopt measures for their own protection if

it was not arrested. At the meeting of Congress, petitions poured in from the North, calling upon Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, and to prohibit what they called the internal slave trade between the states, avowing at the same time that their ultimate object was to abolish slavery not only in the District but in the states, and throughout the Union. At this period, the number engaged in the agitation was small, and it possessed little or no personal influence.

Neither party in Congress had, at that time, any sympathy with them or their cause. The members of each party presented their petitions with great reluctance. Nevertheless, as small and as contemptible as the party then was, both of the great parties of the North dreaded them. They felt that, though small, they were organized in reference to a subject which had a great and a commanding influence over the Northern mind. Each party, on that account, feared to oppose their petitions, lest the opposite party should take advantage

of the one who opposed by favoring them. The effect was that both united in insisting that the petitions should be received, and Congress take jurisdiction of the subject for which they prayed; and, to justify their course, took the extraordinary ground that Congress was bound to receive petitions on every subject, however objectionable it might be, and whether they had or had not jurisdiction over the subject. These views prevailed in the House of Representatives, and partially in the Senate, and thus the party succeeded, in their first movement, in gaining what they proposed—a position in Congress from which the agitation could be extended over the whole Union. This was the commencement of the agitation which has ever since continued, and which, as it is now acknowledged, has endangered the Union itself.

As to myself, I believed, at that early period, if the party who got up the petitions should succeed in getting Congress to take jurisdiction, that agitation would follow, and that it would, in the end, if not arrested,

destroy the Union. I then so expressed myself in debate, and called upon both parties to take ground against taking jurisdiction, but in vain. Had my voice been heard, and Congress refused taking jurisdiction by the united votes of all parties, the agitation which followed would have been prevented, and the fanatic movements accompanying the agitation, which have brought us to our present perilous condition, would have become extinct from the want of something to feed the flame. That was the time for the North to show her devotion to the Union; but unfortunately, both of the great parties of that section were so intent on obtaining or retaining party ascendancy, that all other considerations were overlooked or forgotten.

What have since followed are but natural consequences. With the success of their first movement, this small fanatical party began to acquire strength, and with that, to become an object of courtship to both of the great parties. The necessary consequence was, a farther increase of power,

and a gradual tainting of the of both of the other parties with their until the infection has extended o and the great mass of the populati North, who, whatever may be thei of the original abolition party, w keeps up its distinctive organizatio ever fail, when it comes to actin operate in carrying out their 1 With the increase of their influen extend the sphere of their actio short period after they had co their first movement, they had sufficient influence to induce the Le of most of the Northern states to which, in effect, abrogated the of the Constitution that provides delivering up of fugitive slaves.

Not long after, petitions foll abolish slavery in forts, magazines : yards, and all other places where had exclusive power of legislatio was followed by petitions, and re of legislatures of the Northern st Popular meetings, to exclude the



states from all territories acquired, or to be acquired, and to prevent the admission of any state hereafter into the Union which by its Constitution does not prohibit slavery. And Congress is invoked to do all this expressly with the view of the final abolition of slavery in the states. That has been avowed to be the ultimate object, from the beginning of the agitation until the present time, and yet the great body of both parties of the North, with the full knowledge of the fact, although disowning the abolitionists, have co-operated with them in almost all their measures.

Such is a brief history of the agitation, so far as it has yet advanced. Now, I ask, Senators, what is there to prevent its farther progress, until it fulfills the ultimate end proposed, unless some decisive measure should be adopted to prevent it? Has any one of the causes, which have added to its increase from its original small and contemptible beginning, until it has attained its present magnitude, diminished in force? Is the original cause of the movement—that

slavery is a sin, and ought to be suppressed—weaker now than at the commencement? Or is the abolition party less numerous or influential? Or have they less influence over elections? or less control over the two great parties of the North in elections? Or has the South greater means of influencing or controlling the movements of this government now than it had when the agitation commenced? To all these questions but one answer can be given. No. No. No. The very reverse is true. Instead of weaker, all the elements in favor of agitation are stronger now than they were in 1835, when the agitation first commenced. While all the elements of influence on the part of the South are weaker, I again ask, what is to stop this agitation, unless something decisive is done, until the great and final object at which it aims—the abolition of slavery in the South—is consummated? Is it, then, not certain that, if something decisive is not now done to arrest it, the South will be forced to choose between abolition and secession? Indeed, as events are now mov-

ing, it will not require the South to secede, to dissolve the Union; agitation will of itself effect it, of which its past history furnishes abundant proof, as I shall next proceed to show.

It is a great mistake to suppose that disunion can be effected by a single blow. The cords which bind these states together in one common union are far too numerous and powerful for that. Disunion must be the work of time. It is only through a long process and in succession that the cords can snap, until the whole fabric falls asunder. Already the agitation of the slavery question has snapped some of the most important, and has greatly weakened all the others, as I shall proceed to show.

The cords that bind the states together are not only many, but various in character. Among them some are spiritual or ecclesiastical; some political; others social; others appertain to the benefits conferred by the Union; and others to the feelings of duty and obligation.

The strongest of those of a spiritual and

ecclesiastical nature consisted in the unity of the great religious denominations, all of which originally embraced the Union. All these denominations, with the exception, perhaps, of the Catholics, were organized very much upon the principle of our political institutions. Beginning with smaller meetings, corresponding with the political divisions of the country, their organization terminated in one great central assemblage, corresponding very much with the character of Congress. At these meetings the principal clergymen and lay members of the respective denominations from all parts of the Union met, to transact business relating to their common concerns. It was not confined to what appertained to the doctrines and discipline of the respective denominations, but extended to plans for disseminating the Bible, establishing missionaries, distributing tracts, and establishing presses for the publication of tracts, newspapers and periodicals, with a view of diffusing religious information, and for the support of the doctrines and creeds of the denomination.

All this combined contributed greatly to strengthen the bonds of the Union. The strong ties which held each denomination together formed a strong cord to hold the whole Union together; but as powerful as they were, they have not been able to resist the explosive effect of slavery agitation.

The first of these cords which snapped under its explosive force was that of the powerful Methodist Episcopal Church. The numerous and strong ties which held it together are all broken, and its unity gone. They now form separate churches, and instead of that feeling of attachment and devotion to the interests of the whole church, which was formerly felt, they are now arrayed into two hostile bodies, engaged in litigation about what was formerly their common property.

The next cord that snapped was that of the Baptists, one of the largest and most respectable of the denominations; that of the Presbyterians is not entirely snapped, but some of its strands have given way; that of the Episcopal church is the only one of

the four great Protestant denominations which remains unbroken and entire. The strongest cord of a political character consists of the many and strong ties that have held together the two great parties, which have, with some modifications, existed from the beginning of the government. They both extended to every portion of the Union, and had strongly contributed to hold all its parts together. But this powerful cord has proved no better than the spiritual. It resisted for a long time the explosive tendency of the agitation, but has finally snapped under its force—if not entirely, nearly so. Nor is there one of the remaining cords which has not been greatly weakened. To this extent the Union has already been destroyed by agitation, in the only way it can be, by snapping asunder and weakening the cords which bind it together.

If the agitation goes on, the same force acting with increased intensity as has been shown, there will be nothing left to hold the states together, except force. But surely

that can, with no propriety of language, be called a Union, when the only means by which the weaker is held connected with the stronger portion is force. It may, indeed, keep them connected, but the connection will partake much more of the character of subjugation on the part of the weaker to the stronger, than the Union of free, independent and sovereign states in one federal union, as they stood in the early stages of the government, and which only is worthy of the sacred name of union.

Having now, Senators, explained what it is that endangers the Union, and traced it to its cause, and explained its nature and character, the great question again recurs: How can the Union be saved? To this I answer, there is but one way by which it can be, and that is, by adopting such measures as will satisfy the states belonging to the Southern section that they can remain in the Union consistently with their honor and their safety. There is again, only one way by which that can be effected, and that is, by removing the causes by which this

assailants, but we cannot believe them to be sincere; for if they loved the Union, they would necessarily be devoted to the Constitution. It made the Union, and to destroy the Constitution would be to destroy the Union. But the only reliable and certain evidence of devotion to the Constitution is, to abstain on the one hand from violating it, and to repel, on the other, all attempts to violate it. It is only by faithfully performing those high duties, that the Constitution can be preserved, and with it the Union.

But how then stands the profession of devotion to the Union by our assailants, when brought to this test? Have they abstained from violating the Constitution? Let the many acts passed by the Northern states to set aside and annul the clause of the Constitution providing for the delivery up of fugitive slaves, answer. I cite this, not that it is the only instance (for there are many others), but because the violation in this particular is too notorious and palpable to be denied. Again, have they



stood forth faithfully to repel violations of the Constitution? Let their course in reference to the agitation of the slavery question, which was commenced and has been carried on for fifteen years, avowedly for the purpose of abolishing slavery in the states—an object all acknowledge to be unconstitutional—answer. Let them show a single instance, during this long period, in which they have denounced the agitators, or their many attempts to effect what is admitted to be unconstitutional, or a single measure which they have brought forward for that purpose. How can we, with all those facts before us, believe that they are sincere in their professions of devotion to the Union; or avoid believing that, by assuming the cloak of patriotism, their profession is but intended to increase the vigor of their assaults, and to weaken the force of our resistance?

Nor can we regard the profession of devotion to the Union, on the part of those who are not our assailants, as sincere, when they pronounce eulogies upon the Union

evidently with the intent of charging us with disunion, without uttering one word of denunciation against our assailants. If friends of the Union, their course should be to unite with us in repelling these assaults, and denouncing the authors as enemies of the Union. Why they avoid this, and pursue the course they obviously do, it is for them to explain.

Nor can the Union be saved by invoking the name of the illustrious Southerner whose mortal remains repose on the western bank of the Potomac. He was one of us—a slaveholder and a planter. We have studied his history, and find nothing in it to justify submission to wrong. On the contrary, his great fame rests on the solid foundation, that while he was careful to avoid doing wrong to others, he was prompt and decided in repelling wrong. I trust that, in this respect, we profited by his example.

Nor can we find anything in his history to deter us from seceding from the Union, should it fail to fulfill the objects for which it was instituted, by being permanently and

hopelessly converted into the means of oppression instead of protection. On the contrary, we find much in his example to encourage us, should we be forced to the extremity of deciding between submission and disunion.


There existed then as well as now a union—that between the parent country and her then colonies. It was a union that had much to endear it to the people of the colonies. Under its protecting and superintending care the colonies were planted and grew up and prospered through a long course of years, until they became populous and wealthy. Its benefits were not limited to them. Their extensive agricultural and other productions gave birth to a flourishing commerce, which richly rewarded the parent country for the trouble and expense of establishing and protecting them. Washington was born, and nurtured, and grew up to manhood under that union. He acquired his early distinction in its service; and there is every reason to believe that he was devotedly attached to it. But his

devotion was a rational one. He was attached to it, not as an end, but as a means to an end. When it failed to fulfill its end, and, instead of affording protection, was converted into the means of oppressing the colonies, he did not hesitate to draw his sword, and head the great movement by which that union was forever severed, and the independence of these states established. This was the great and crowning glory of his life, which has spread his fame over the whole globe, and will transmit it to the latest posterity.

Nor can the plan proposed by the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, or that of the administration, save the Union. I shall pass by, without remark, the plan proposed by the Senator, and proceed directly to the consideration of that of the administration. I, however, assure the distinguished and able Senator that, in taking this course, no disrespect whatever is intended to him or to his plan. I have adopted it, because so many Senators of distinguished abilities, who were present

when he delivered his speech and explanation of his plan, and who were fully capable to do justice to the side they support, have replied to him.

The plan of the administration cannot save the Union, because it can have no effect toward satisfying the states composing the Southern section of the Union, that they can consistently with safety and honor remain in the Union. It is, in fact, but a modification of the Wilmot proviso. It proposes to effect the same object—to exclude the South from all the territory acquired by the Mexican treaty. It is well known that the South is united against the Wilmot proviso, and has committed itself by solemn resolutions to resist, should it be adopted. Its opposition is not to the name, but to that which it proposes to effect. That the Southern states hold it to be unconstitutional, unjust, inconsistent with their equality as members of the common Union, and calculated to destroy irretrievably the equilibrium between the two sections. These objections equally apply to



what, for brevity, I will call the Executive proviso. There is no difference between it and the Wilmot, except in the mode of effecting the object; and in that respect, I must say, that the latter is much the least objectionable. It goes to its object openly, boldly and directly. It claims for Congress unlimited power over the territories, and proposes to assert it over the territories acquired from Mexico, by a positive prohibition of slavery. Not so the Executive proviso. It takes an indirect course, and in order to elude the Wilmot proviso, and thereby avoid encountering the united and determined resistance of the South, it denies, by implication, the authority of Congress to legislate for the territories, and claims the right as belonging exclusively to the inhabitants of the territories. But to effect the object of excluding the South, it takes care, in the meantime, of letting in emigrants from the Northern states, and other quarters, except emigrants from the South, which it takes special care to exclude, by holding up to

them the dread of having their slaves liberated under the Mexican laws. The necessary consequence is, to exclude the South from the territory, just as effectually as would the Wilmot proviso. The only difference in this respect is, that what one proposes to effect directly and openly, the other proposes to effect indirectly and covertly.

But the Executive proviso is more objectionable still than the Wilmot, in another and more important particular. The latter, to effect its object, inflicts a dangerous wound upon the Constitution, by depriving the Southern states, as joint partners and owners of the territories, of their rights in them; but it inflicts no greater wound than is absolutely necessary to effect its object. The former, on the contrary, while it inflicts the same wound, inflicts others equally great, and if possible greater, as I shall next proceed to explain.

In claiming the right for the inhabitants, instead of Congress, to legislate over the territories, in the Executive proviso, it assumes that the sovereignty over the terri-

tories is vested in the former; or, to express it in the language used in a resolution offered by one of the Senators from Texas (Gen. Houston, now absent), "they have the same inherent right of self-government as the people in the states." The assumption is utterly false, unconstitutional, without example, and contrary to the entire practice of the government, from its commencement to the present time, as I shall next proceed to show.


The recent movement of individuals in California to form a constitution and a state government, and to appoint Senators and Representatives, is the first fruit of this monstrous assumption. If the individuals who have made this movement had gone into California as adventurers, and if, as such, they had conquered the territory and established their independence, the sovereignty of the country would have been vested in them as a separate and independent community. In that case they would have had the right to form a constitution and to establish a government for them-



expressly provides that Congress shall have power "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper to carry into execution the foregoing powers," (those vested in Congress) "and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof." It matters not, then, where the power is vested; for if vested at all in the government of the United States or any of its departments or officers, the power carrying it into execution is clearly vested in Congress. But this important proviso, while it gives to Congress the power of legislating over territories, imposes important restrictions on its exercise, by restricting Congress to passing laws necessary and proper for carrying the power into execution. The prohibition extends, not only to all laws not suitable or appropriate to the object, but also to all that are unjust, unequal or unfair, for all such laws would be unnecessary and improper, and therefore, unconstitutional.

Having now established beyond con-

troversy that the sovereignty over the territories is vested in the United States—that is, in the several states composing the Union—and that the power of legislating over them is expressly vested in Congress, it follows that the individuals in California who have undertaken to form a constitution and a state, and to exercise the power of legislation, without the consent of Congress, have usurped the sovereignty of the states and the authority of Congress, and have acted in open defiance of both. In other words, what they have done is revolutionary and rebellious in its character, anarchical in its tendency, and calculated to lead to the most dangerous consequences. Had they acted from premeditation and design, it would have been in fact an actual rebellion, but such is not the case. The blame lies much less upon them than upon those who have induced them to take a course so unconstitutional and dangerous. They have been led into it by language held here, and the course pursued by the executive branch of the government.



I have not seen the answer of the Executive to the calls made by the two houses of Congress, for information as to the course which it took, or the part which it acted, in reference to what was done in California. I understand the answers have not yet been printed. But there is enough known to justify the assertion that those who profess to represent and act under the authority of the Executive have advised, aided and encouraged the movement which terminated in forming what they call a constitution and a state. General Riley, who professed to act as civil governor, called the Convention, determined on the number and distribution of the delegates, appointed the time and place of its meetings, was present during the session, and gave its proceedings his approbation and sanction. If he acted without authority, he ought to have been tried, or at least reprimanded and disarmed. Neither having been done, the presumption is that his course has been approved. This, of itself, is sufficient to identify the Executive with his acts, and to make it responsible

for them. I touch not the question whether General Riley was appointed, or received the instructions under which he professed to act, from the present Executive or its predecessor. If from the former, it would implicate the preceding as well as the present administration. If not, the responsibility rests exclusively on the present.

It is manifest, from this statement, that the Executive Department has undertaken to perform acts, preparatory to the meeting of the individuals, to form their so-called Constitution and state government, which appertained exclusively to Congress. Indeed, they are identical in many respects with the provisions adopted by Congress, when it gives permission to a territory to form a constitution and government, in order to be admitted as a state into the Union.

Having now shown that the assumption upon which the Executive and the individuals in California acted, throughout this whole affair, is informal, unconstitutional, and dangerous, it remains to make a few

remarks, in order to show that what has been done is contrary to the entire practice of government, from its commencement to the present time.

From its commencement until the time when Michigan was admitted, the practice was uniform. Territorial governments were first organized by Congress. The government of the United States appointed the governors, judges, secretaries, marshals, and other officers, and the inhabitants of the territory were represented by legislative bodies, whose acts were subject to the revision of Congress. This state of things continued until the government of a territory applied to Congress to permit its inhabitants to form a constitution and government, preparatory to admission into the Union. The preliminary act to giving permission was to ascertain whether the inhabitants were sufficiently numerous to authorize them to be formed into a state. This was done by taking a census. That being done, and the number proving sufficient, permission was granted. The act

granting it fixed all the preliminaries—the time and place of holding the convention; the qualification of the voters; establishing its boundaries, and all other measures necessary to be settled previous to admission. The act giving permission necessarily withdraws the sovereignty of the United States, and leaves the inhabitants of the incipient state as free to form their constitution and government as were the original states of the Union after they had declared their independence. At this stage, the inhabitants of the territory became for the first time a people, in legal and constitutional language. Prior to this, they were, by the old acts of Congress, called inhabitants, and not people. All this is perfectly consistent with the sovereignty of the United States, with the powers of Congress, and with the right of a people to self-government.

Michigan was the first case in which there was any departure from the uniform rule of acting. Hers was a very slight departure from established usage. The ordinance of

'87 secured to her the right of becoming a state when she should have 60,000 inhabitants. Owing to some neglect, Congress delayed taking the census. In the meantime, her population increased until it clearly exceeded more than twice the number which entitled her to admission. At this stage she formed a constitution and government without the census being taken by the United States, and Congress received the admission without going through the formality of taking it, as there was no doubt she had more than a sufficient number to entitle her to admission. She was not admitted at the first session she applied, owing to some difficulty respecting the boundary between her and Ohio. The great irregularity, as to her admission, took place at the next session, but on a point which can have no possible connection with the case of California.

The irregularity in all other cases that have since occurred is of a similar character. In all, there existed territorial governments, established by Congress, with

officers appointed by the United States. In all, the territorial government took the lead in calling conventions, and fixing preliminaries, preparatory to the formation of a constitution and admission into the Union. They all recognized the sovereignty of the United States, and the authority of Congress over the territories; and, whenever there was any departure from established usage, it was done on the presumed consent of Congress, and not in defiance of its authority, or the sovereignty of the United States over the territories. In this respect California stands alone, without usage or a single example to cover her case.


It belongs now, Senators, for you to decide what part you will act in reference to this unprecedented transaction. The Executive has laid the paper purporting to be the constitution of California before you, and asks you to admit her into the Union as a state, and the question is, will you or will you not admit her? It is a grave question, and there rests upon you a heavy responsi-



bility. Much, very much will depend upon your decision. If you admit her, you endorse and give your sanction to all that has been done. Are you prepared to do so? Are you prepared to surrender your power of legislation for the territories—a power expressly vested in Congress by the Constitution, as has been fully established? Can you, consistent with your oath to support the Constitution, surrender it? Are you prepared to admit that the inhabitants of the territories possess the sovereignty over them? and that any number, more or less, may claim any extent of territory they please; may form a constitution and government, and erect it into a state, without asking your permission? Are you prepared to surrender the sovereignty of the United States over whatever territory may be hereafter acquired, to the first adventurers who may rush into it? Are you prepared to surrender virtually to the Executive Department all the powers which you have heretofore exercised over the territories? If not, how can you, consistently with your

duty and your oath to support the Constitution, give your assent to the admission of California as a state, under a pretended constitution and government?

Can you believe that the project of a constitution which they have adopted has the least validity? Can you believe that there is such a state in reality as the state of California? No; there is no such state. It has no legal or constitutional existence. It has no validity, and can have none, without your sanction. How, then, can you admit it as a state, when, according to the provisions of the Constitution, your power is limited to admitting new states? That is, they must be states, existing states, independent of your sanction, before you can admit them. When you give your permission to the inhabitants of a territory to form a constitution and a state, the constitution and state they form derive their authority from the people, and not from you. The state, before admitted, is actually a state, and does not become so by the act of admission, as would be the




case with California, should you admit her, contrary to constitutional provisions and established usages heretofore.

The Senators on the other side of the chamber must permit me to make a few remarks in this connection, particularly applicable to them. With the exception of a few Senators from the South, sitting on that side of the chamber, when the Oregon question was before this body, not two years since, you took, if I mistake not, universally, the ground that Congress had the sole and absolute power of legislating for the territories. How, then, can you now, after the short interval which has elapsed, abandon the ground which you then took, and thereby virtually admit that the power of legislating, instead of being in Congress, is in the inhabitants of the territories? How can you justify and sanction by your votes the acts of the Executive, which are in direct derogation to what you then contended for? But, to approach still nearer to the present time, how can you, after condemning, a little more than a year

since, the grounds taken by the party which you defeated at the last election, wheel round and support by your votes the grounds which, as explained by the candidate of the party at the last election, are identical with those on which the Executive has acted in reference to California? What are we to understand by all this? Must we conclude that there is no sincerity, no faith, in the acts and declaration of public men, and that all is mere acting or hollow professions? Or are we to conclude that the exclusion of the South from the territories acquired from Mexico is an object of so paramount a character in your estimation that right, justice, constitution and consistency must all yield, when they stand in the way of our exclusion?

But, it may be asked, what is to be done with California, should she not be admitted? I answer, remand her back to the territorial condition, as was done in the case of Tennessee, in the early stage of the government. Congress, in her case, had established a territorial government, in the usual form,



with a governor, judges, and other officers appointed by the United States. She was entitled, under the deed of cession, to be admitted into the Union as a state, as soon as she had 60,000 inhabitants. The territorial government, believing it had the number, took a census, by which it appeared it exceeded it. She then formed a constitution as a state, and applied for admission. Congress refused to admit her, on the grounds that the census should be taken by the United States, and that Congress had not determined whether the territory should be formed into one or two states, as it was authorized to do, under the cession. She returned quietly to her territorial condition. An act was passed to take a census by the United States, and providing that the territory should form one state. All afterward was regularly conducted, and the territory admitted as a state in due form. The irregularities in the case of California are immeasurably greater, and afford a much stronger reason for pursuing the same course. But, it may be said, California

may not submit. That is not probable, but, if she should not, when she refuses, it will then be the time for us to decide what is to be done.

Having now shown what cannot save the Union, I return to the question with which I commenced—How can the Union be saved? There is but one way by which it can, with any certainty, be saved, and that is by a full and final settlement, on the principles of justice, of all the questions at issue between the two sections. The South asks for justice, simple justice, and less she ought not to take. She has no compromise to offer but the Constitution, and no concessions or surrender to make. She has already surrendered so much, that she has little left to surrender. Such a settlement would go to the root of the evil, remove all cause of discontent, and satisfy the South that she could remain honestly and safely in the Union, and thereby restore the harmony and fraternal feelings between the sections which existed anterior to the Missouri agitation. Nothing else can, with

any certainty, finally and forever settle the question at issue, terminate agitation, and save the Union.

But can this be done? Yes, easily; not by the weaker party, for it can of itself do nothing—not even protect itself—but by the stronger. The North has only to will it, to do justice, and perform her duty, in order to accomplish it—to do justice by conceding to the South an equal right in the acquired territory; and to do her duty by causing the stipulations relative to fugitive slaves to be faithfully fulfilled—to cease the agitation of the slave question, and provide for the insertion of a provision in the Constitution, by an amendment, which will restore in substance the power she possessed of protecting herself before the equilibrium between the sections was destroyed by the action of this government. There will be no difficulty in devising such a provision—one that will protect the South, and which at the same time will improve and strengthen the government, instead of impairing or weakening it.

But will the North agree to do this? It is for her to answer this question. But I will say she cannot refuse if she has half the love of the Union which she professes to have, or without justly exposing herself to the charge that her love of power and aggrandizement is far greater than her love of the Union. At all events, the responsibility of saving the Union is on the North, and not the South. The South cannot save it by any act of hers, and the North may save it without any sacrifice whatever, unless to do justice and to perform her duties under the Constitution be regarded by her as a sacrifice.

It is time, Senators, that there should be an open and manly avowal on all sides as to what is to be done. If the question is not now settled, it is uncertain whether it ever can hereafter be, and we, as the representatives of the states of this Union, regarded as governments, should come to a distinct understanding as to our respective views, in order to ascertain whether the great questions at issue between the two



sections can be settled or not. If you who represent the stronger portion cannot agree to settle them on the broad principle of justice and duty, say so, and let the states we represent agree to separate and part in peace.

If you are willing we should part in peace, tell us so, and we shall know what to do when you reduce the question to submission or resistance. If you remain silent, you then compel us to infer what you intend. In that case California will become the test question. If you admit her under all the difficulties that oppose her admission, you compel us to infer that you intend to exclude us from the whole of the acquired territories, with the intention of destroying irretrievably the equilibrium between the two sections. We would be blind, not to perceive, in that case, that your real objects are power and aggrandizement; and infatuated, not to act accordingly.

I have now, Senators, done my duty, in expressing my opinions fully, freely and candidly on this solemn occasion. In doing

so, I have been governed by the motives which have governed me in all the stages of the agitation of the slavery question since its commencement; and exerted myself to arrest it, with the intention of saving the Union, if it could be done; and, if it cannot, to save the section where it has pleased Providence to cast my lot, and which I sincerely believe has justice and the Constitution on its side. Having faithfully done my duty to the best of my ability, both to the Union and my section, throughout the whole of this agitation, I shall have the consolation, let what will come, that I am free from all responsibility.



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